

## Readings and Assignments: Weeks One-Seven

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

**If I make a special arrangement with you for due dates, etc., explain it in a note or e-mail message and ask me to sign or confirm it; show it to me to remind me of our arrangement.**

📄 indicates a handout in class. 📖 indicates material from *Philosophy 120 Course Pack*.  
Materials not protected by copyright 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.

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

### **What is philosophy and how do you do it?**

1. Tuesday, January 12
2. Tuesday, January 19
3. Tuesday, January 26

### **When—if ever—am I truly free?**

3. Tuesday, January 26  
Friday, January 29: **DUE: *First Essay* preferences**
4. Tuesday, February 2
5. Tuesday, February 9: **DUE: *First Essay* draft**

### **February 15-20: Mid-term Break**

6. Tuesday, February 23

### **What am I as a thinking thing?**

7. Tuesday, March 2: **DUE: *First Essay* Individual Position Papers & Group Conclusions**
8. Tuesday, March 9
9. Tuesday, March 16

### **Who am I really? How do I tell?**

9. Tuesday, March 16
10. Tuesday, March 23: **DUE: *Second Essay* draft**
11. Tuesday, March 30
12. Tuesday, April 6: **DUE: *Group Presentations***
13. Tuesday, April 13: **DUE: *Group Presentations*; *Second Essay***

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

## 1. Tuesday, January 12

What is philosophy and how do you do it?

- 📖 [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

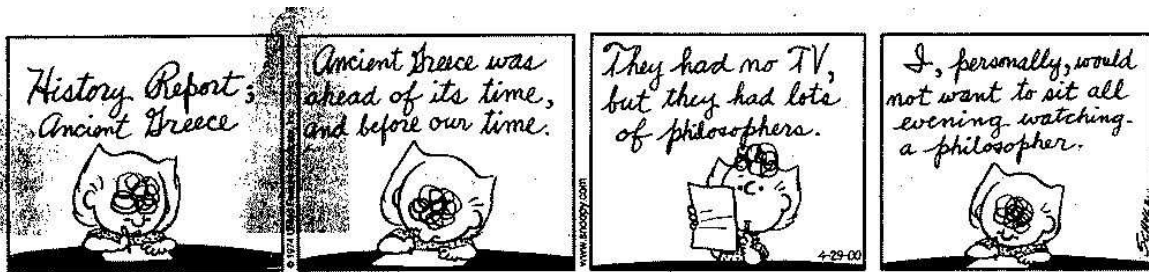
DO 📖 [Introductory Questions: Personal](#).

READ 📖 1.1 [Introduction: Philosophy 120](#),  
📖 1.2 [Course Description. Questions?](#)

READ 📖 1.3 [Methods of Inquiry](#),  
📖 1.4 [Writing without Gender Bias](#).

READ 📖 2.2 [Plato](#): excerpt from *Republic* (The Cave), and **take notes** (not to be turned 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: Individual Prep Questions: Methods of Inquiry: Practice

For **one** of the following questions **assigned to you**, do *Methods of Inquiry*, section B, steps 1 (define the word(s) in bold) and 4 (explain three alternative answers):

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. Tuesday, January 19

What is philosophy and how do you do it?

**DUE: *Introductory Questions: Personal.***

The Cave

**DUE: *Individual Prep Questions: Methods of Inquiry: Practice.***

Methods of Inquiry

Introduction: Sartre and existentialism

### Assignment

READ 📖4.1 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.)

*Assignment continued on next page...*

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..." in [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. Tuesday, January 26

#### What is philosophy and how do you do it?

*Methods of Inquiry: Practice*

#### When—if ever—am I truly free?

Co-op work on Sartre.

**DUE:** *Individual Prep Questions: Sartre*

#### Assignment

**READ** [5.1 Butler, \*Erewhon\*,](#)  
[3.3 Minton, "Free Will and Determinism."](#)  
[7.1 Jean Grimshaw: "Autonomy and Identity in Feminist Thinking"](#)  
[8.2 Thomas D. Davis: "Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends"](#)

#### **DUE Friday, January 29: First Essay: If you care, e-mail me your list of 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. Tuesday, February 2**

##### **When—if ever—am I truly free?**

Sartre: Questions?

Samuel Butler: *Erewhon*

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

Freedom & Determinism: Introduction

📖 *First Essay*: assign positions and readings

##### **Assignment**

**DUE NEXT SESSION:** Draft of steps 1, 3, 4 of your *Individual Position Paper*.  
(4 points towards *Individual Prep and Informal Co-op* mark)

#### **5. Tuesday, February 9**

##### **When—if ever—am I truly free?**

Freedom and Determinism

Work on *First Essay*.

**DUE:** Draft of steps 1, 3, 4 of your *Individual Position Paper* 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*)

#### **February 15-20: Mid-term Break**

#### **6. Tuesday, February 23**

##### **When—if ever—am I truly free?**

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 NEXT SESSION: 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)?

**BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHICH ARGUMENT: QUOTE IT?**

- 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.)

**INSERT BetterWorse Cartoon**

- 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.

**IS THIS IN 1200N?**

4. Comment on anything else you find particularly interesting in this *Meditation*.

**7. Tuesday, March 2****DUE: First Essay Individual Position Papers & Group Conclusions****What am I as a thinking thing?**

*Meditation I*

**DUE: Meditation I: Individual Prep Questions**

*Meditation II: Introduction*

*Meditation VI, Synopsis: Introduction*

**Assignment on next page...**

## Assignment

### READ Meditation II.

#### 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.)

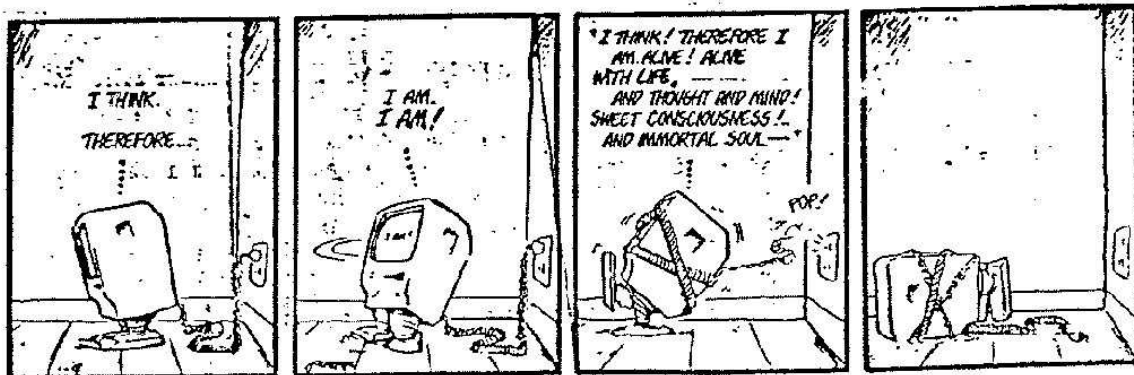
Would the argument, "I walk. Therefore, I am." (Ambulo ergo sum.) have done just as well?

(Do not confuse this statement with its converse: "I am. Therefore, I walk." Compare with: "I walk. Therefore, I have legs," and "I have legs. Therefore, I walk.")

(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 📖 9.3 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. Tuesday, March 9****What am I as a thinking thing?**

Return and comment on *Meditation I: IPQs*

*Meditation II*

**DUE:** *Meditation II: IPQs*

📄 *Second Essay*

## Readings & Assignments: The Rest

### 8. Tuesday, March 9

#### What am I as a thinking thing?

Return and comment on *Meditation I: IPQs*

*Meditation II*

**DUE:** *Meditation II: IPQs*

📖 *Second Essay*

#### Assignment

**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 small degree of change, gradualness of change, and continuation of serving a common end, as explaining 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.a. 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)
- 2.b. 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)
3. 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.
4. Comment on anything else you find particularly interesting in Hume's argument.

*Assignment continued on next page...*

**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. A Group may expel a group member who does not contribute by the group not putting his or her name on the short essay required as part of its work.

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 *Final Essay* (in class) will be based on these topics.

**Topics**

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

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.

Some general readings are noted that you may wish to consult when considering a topic.

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.

📖 11.4 Thomas D. Davis: "Strange Behaviour"

📖 12.1 Daniel Dennett: "Conditions of Personhood"

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, .

📖 12.1 Daniel Dennett: "Conditions of Personhood"

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.

📖 12.2 John Passmore, "The Humpty-Dumpty Argument"

**Assignment continued on next page...**

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?

📖 12.3 Thomas Davis: "Life After Life"

📖 12.4 Matt Groening, from *Life in Hell*.

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 almost two-thirds of you agreed that women and men think differently?

📖 12.5 Raymond Williams, from *Keywords*

6. If you 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 sources on the topic.

### **DUE SESSION 10: Draft of 📄 *Second Essay***

#### **9. Tuesday, March 16**

##### **What am I as a thinking thing?**

Meditation VI, Synopsis: 📖 9.4 *The Cartesian Doctrine: Meditation VI and Synopsis*

##### **Who am I really? How do I tell?**

Personal Identity: 📖 10.1 *Who Am I?*

**DUE:** *Hume: Individual Prep Questions*

**DUE:** *Group Presentation* topics ranked in your order of preference.

#### **Assignment**

**READ:** 11.1 Daniel Dennett: "Artificial Intelligence as Philosophy and as Psychology"

📖 11.2 Ludwig Wittgenstein, from *Philosophical Investigations* and *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

📖 11.3 Amélie Oksenberg Rorty: "Introduction," "A Literary Postscript" from *The Identities of Persons*

📖 11.4 Thomas D. Davis: "Strange Behaviour"

📖 11.5 Jorge Luis Borges: "Borges and I"

**DUE NEXT SESSION:** Draft of your 📖 *Second Essay* to show me and to work with in groups.

### **10. Tuesday, March 23**

#### **Who am I really? How do I tell?**

Personal Identity: 📖 10.1 *Who Am I?*—Finish

Co-op work on *Second Essay*.

**DUE:** draft for your 📖 *Second Essay*

📖 *Group Presentation*: Assign topics and readings—attendance taken.

#### **Assignment**

**WORK ON** 📖 *Group Presentation*.

**DUE NEXT SESSION:** a copy of *Double-Entry Journal* on your **Specific Readings**.

***Group Presentation Handouts (and overheads) due one hour before your presentation session*** if you want me to photocopy or 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. Tuesday, March 30**

#### **Who am I really? How do I tell?**

Post-modernism: 📖 11.6 *End of the Modern Search for Knowledge and Reality?*

Work on *Group Presentations*: Attendance taken.

**DUE:** *Double-Entry Journal* on your **Specific Readings**.

#### **Assignment**

**DUE NEXT SESSION:** ***First Group Presentation***

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

### **12. Tuesday, April 6**

Work on *Group Presentation*: attendance taken.

*First Group Presentation*

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

***Assignment on next page...***

## **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 or make overheads.

**DUE NEXT SESSION:** *Second Essay* for those making Group Presentations at session 12.

### **13. Tuesday, April 13**

**Second *Group Presentation***

**Third *Group Presentation: Individuality***

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

### **Final Exam, *Third Essay***

Following the *Methods of Inquiry* steps, write an essay of no more than about 1500 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 any of my PHIL 120 *Final Exam* blocks.