

**PHIL 101/HNRS 175: Philosophical Investigations**  
**Denison University, Fall 2008**

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T/Th 1:30-2:50  
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**Course Narrative:** “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” This cliché question represents a very troubling feature of human rationality. Reasoning is a very powerful tool for understanding the world. But there are times when reason seems to undermine itself—where one can argue apparently well and from apparently good premises, to two inconsistent conclusions or to a conclusion that seems to defy what we know about the world. This course will survey some of the most famous (or perhaps infamous) paradoxes: a philosophically troubling and intellectually stimulating set of problems that have been formulated throughout time, from the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno to twentieth century thinkers such as Russell and Einstein. Some of the problems to be discussed include the Liar Paradox, the Prisoner’s Dilemma, Russell’s Paradox, various paradoxes of mathematical induction, paradoxes of space and time, and selected “paradoxes” of physics.

**Course Objective:** To familiarize the student with the tools to analyze and evaluate informal arguments through reading, writing and discussion of selected philosophical problems.

**Required Texts:**

Michael Clark, *Paradoxes from A to Z*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2007). ISBN: 0415420830, \$25  
Doris Olin, *Paradox* (Queens-McGill University Press, 2003) ISBN: 0773526781, \$27

**Course Schedule:** All dates and content scheduled is tentative and subject to change by the Instructor at any time for any reason. [R] indicates that the reading is available on electronic reserve through the library website (<http://eres.library.denison.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2981>). [E] indicates that the article is available for download through Consort (see the course web page at <http://brommage.freeshell.org> for direct links).

DATE	ASSIGNMENT	TOPIC
2 Sept:	Course Introduction	
4 Sept:	Clark, “Paradox”; Olin, “The Nature of Paradox,” (Ch. 1); Quine, “Ways of Paradox” [R];	What is a Paradox?
9 Sept:	Clark, “The Chicken and the Egg”; Sorensen, “Anaximander and the Riddle of Origin” [R]	The Riddle of Origin

11 Sept:	Clark, "Achilles and the Tortoise," "The Arrow," "The Racecourse." Aristotle, selection from <i>The Physics</i> [R]	Zeno's Paradoxes
16 Sept:	Max Black, "Achilles and the Tortoise" [E]	Zeno's Paradoxes (continued)
18 Sept:	J. F. Thompson, "Tasks and Supertaks" [E]	Thompson's Lamp
23 Sept:	Gibilisco, selection from <i>Understanding Einstein's Theories of Relativity</i> [R]; Paradoxes of Quantum Theory	Paradoxes of Physics
25 Sept:	Heinlein, "By His Bootstraps" [R]	Time Travel
30 Sept:	Clark, "The Liar"; Olin, "Paradox and Contradiction" (Ch. 2)	Liar Paradox
2 Oct:	Clark, "The Paradox of Entailment"; Priest, "What's So Bad About Contradictions?" [E]	The Logic of Contradictions and Dialethism
7 Oct:	Clark, "The Unexpected Examination"; Olin, "Believing in Surprises: The Prediction Paradox" (Ch. 3)	The Prediction Paradox
9 Oct:	Scriveen, "Paradoxical Announcements" [E]; Quine, "On a Supposed Antinomy" [E]; Ayer, "On a Supposed Antinomy" [E]	The Prediction Paradox continued
14 Oct:	Clark, "Moore's Paradox" and TBA	Moore's Paradox
16 Oct.:	Clark, "The Preface Paradox"; Makinson, "The Paradox of the Preface" [E]; Hoffman, "Mr. Makinson's Paradox"[E]	The Preface Paradox
21 Oct:	Olin, "The Preface Paradox, Fallibility and Probability" (Ch. 4)	Preface Paradox Continued
23 Oct:	Clark, "The Lottery"; Olin, "The Lottery Paradox" (Ch. 5)	
28 Oct:	Clark, "Newcombe's Problem"; Olin, "Newcombe's Problem" (Ch. 6)	Paradoxes of Action: Newcombe's Problem

30 Oct:	Clark, "The Prisoner's Dilemma"; Olin The Prisoner's Dilemma (Ch. 7)	Paradoxes of Action: Prisoner's Dilemma
4 Nov:	Clark, "The Heap"; Olin, The Sorities Paradox" (Ch. 8)	Sorities I
6 Nov:	TBA	
11 Nov:	Unger, "There are No Ordinary Things" [E]	Sorities II
13 Nov:	Clark, "The Paradox of the Ravens"; Hempel, "Studies in the Logic of Confirmation" [R]	Paradoxes of Induction: The Ravens
18 Nov:	Clark, "Grue"; Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction" [R]	Paradoxes of Induction: Grue
20 Nov:	TBA	
24-28 Nov:	Thanksgiving Break	
2 Dec:	Clark, "Moral Luck"; Williams and Nagel, "Moral Luck" [E]	Moral Luck
4 Dec:	Clark, "Russell's Paradox"; Russell, "Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types" [E]	Russell's Paradox
9 Dec:	Augustine, selection from <i>The Confessions</i> [R]	Are Paradoxes inevitable?
11 Dec:	Kant, selection from <i>The Critique of Pure Reason</i> [R]	Are Paradoxes (still) inevitable?
18 Dec:	Final Exam (6:30-8:30 PM)	

*Note on the Indeterminacy of Time:* Rarely is there enough time in the semester to cover everything an ideal course in philosophy should cover. Although everything on the reading list this semester is important, I reserve the right to alter the schedule to correspond with the pace of the class.

**Evaluation:** The main point of evaluation for this course will be 4 short response papers (3-5 pages in length) each due throughout the semester. Due dates for these papers will be announced. The one lowest grade on the short response papers will be "dropped" when calculating your final grade. *Late response papers will receive a full letter grade deduction per day late.*

In addition to the short papers, there will be a take-home midterm exam (date TBA), as well as an in-class comprehensive final exam will be given on Thursday, December 18 at 6:30 PM, in conjunction with the University schedule. Anyone who cannot take the final exam for any reason must make arrangements to make it up at least one week prior to the scheduled exam date. Otherwise you will receive a failing grade for the exam.

The following weighting will be used to calculate your grade:

Short response Papers (3-5 pp.)	10% (each)
(best <i>three</i> of four) x 3 =	30 %
Attendance and Participation	20 %
Midterm Exam	20 %
Final Exam	30%

*Note on Academic Dishonesty:* Plagiarism is the ultimate mortal sin of academia. Please, cite properly and document accordingly anything that may appear in your written work for this class. If you are unclear about how to properly document a paper, simply ask me. But err on the side of caution: clear-cut cases of plagiarism (deemed so by myself) will result in failure for the course, and disciplinary action taken up to and including expulsion from the University. All cases of plagiarism will be referred by me to the Provost's Office. All submissions for this class may be cleared through electronic methods to detect plagiarism. Don't try me, I will catch you.

If you are unsure of what plagiarism constitutes, I highly recommend you view the tutorial at the following link: <http://www.cte.usf.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. Ignorance of the law, as they say, is no excuse.

The students and faculty of Denison University and the Department of Philosophy are committed to academic integrity and will not tolerate any violation of this principle. Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity.

Academic dishonesty is, in most cases, intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted - not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations.

As is indicated in Denison's Student Handbook, available through [mydenison.edu](http://mydenison.edu), instructors must refer every act of academic dishonesty to the Associate Provost, and violations may result in failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion. (For further information, see <http://www.denison.edu/student-affairs/handbook/article7.html>).

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss his or her specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support & Enrichment Center in 102 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in that office.

**Expectations, Suggestions and Mandates for an efficient class:**

1. Please arrive to class on time and expect to stay the entire duration of the class. If this is an impossibility, please make every attempt to notify me in advance of tardiness or absence.
2. Especially true in philosophy more than most other areas of study, diligence is important. Some of the reading will be difficult, since these are some of the most profound texts in the history of the world. The difficulty of the subject is indirectly proportional to the amount of work put into the course. Expect to have up to ten hours per week of reading and thinking in order to get an "A" for the course. Additionally, for these reasons, attendance is of vital importance.
3. Please come to class prepared (i.e., any reading assigned read, any questions concerning readings or lectures prepared, etc.)
4. Please be respectful of each other in the class. There will be times when students disagree about a topic discussed in class. This is a didactic process, not a combative one.
5. Due to the great excess of material and limited time in which we must cover ground, please do not create a disruption for those people who are attempting to learn. Disruptions include blurting out answers, name calling, chiding each other, snoring, etc. Laughing at the Instructor's jokes is obviously exempted from this policy. In addition, personal audio devices (except those in use to record lectures) and loud crunching snack foods are prohibited from the classroom. ***PLEASE TURN OFF your cellphones in class.***
6. Please feel free to make mistakes. We all will from time to time, even your omniscient instructor.
7. Please make use of my office hours. Waiting until the last moment in the semester to catch up is not advisable. I am excellent at fixing small problems, but horrendous at fixing large ones. The only difference between small and large problems is time.
8. Have fun! The material is only as dry as you make it out to be. Sharpening one's mind can be an exhilarating process.