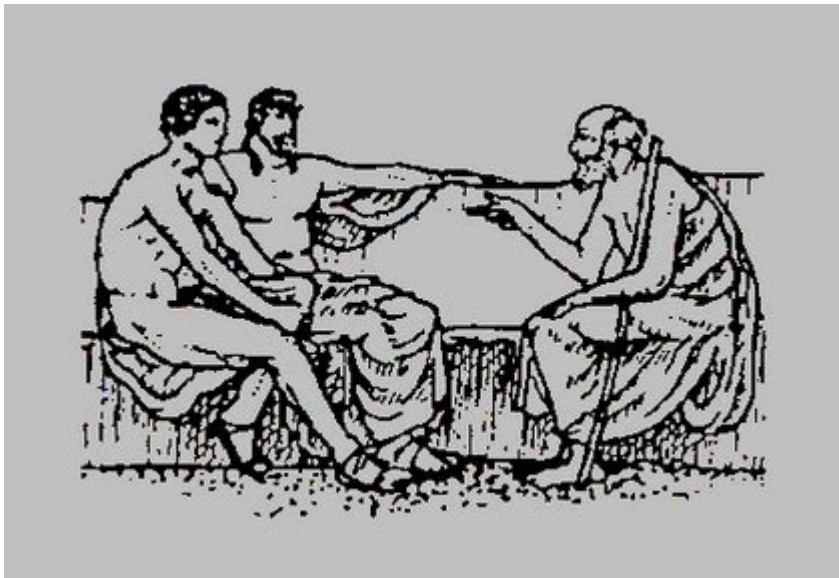


PHIL103 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY I

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Course Particulars

Course details:

This class will meet for one hour on Tuesday 15.40 and two hours on Fridays 13.40 and 14.40. The remaining hour on Wednesday 8.40 will be used for make up classes, in case I have to miss a class during the semester.

Before coming to class you will need to read the required text, as specified in the readings section of the syllabus. You will also need to prepare the relevant homework for that week, i.e. answer the questions (in note form) which are included in this pack. This will count towards your participation grade.

I will be available for consultation regarding any aspect of this course during my office hours to be specified in week 1. If you cannot see me at these times you can either write me an email (berges@bilkent.edu.tr) or ask for an appointment at another time.

If too many people have classes during my proposed office hours, I will consider changing them. Please make sure you tell me *in the first two weeks of the semester* if you have classes during these times.

Course objectives (for 103 and 104)

The main emphasis of these two courses will be on the transmission of philosophical skills and methods. You will learn how to read and write philosophy, how to argue philosophically and engage in philosophical dialogue. In order to acquire these skills, you must be willing to practice them even if that means getting it wrong a lot in the beginning!

The skills you will learn, both in this course and its successor, Introduction to Philosophy II, are meant to be the foundation of what you will learn in philosophy. They are absolutely rock-bottom techniques for both philosophical thinking and philosophical/academic writing. As such, we will focus quite heavily on developing them in these courses and, moreover, expect your facility with these skills to be carried over to the rest of the courses you will take during your philosophy degree. So learn them! Burn them into your brain. When you are writing your thesis or a difficult paper on the doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time, you do not want to have to go back and look up how to formulate a citation in #### format or how, exactly, to understand the point of a particular argumentative technique.

A well-known trick for success in physical activity is to develop "muscle memory" with regard to certain skills. Think of the last time you thought about how to tie your shoes (i.e. when you were 3.) A similar, but less well-known trick for academic success is to develop "muscle memory" with regard to certain reading, writing, and interpretational skills. After sufficient training, you will have honed your abilities to detect important features of a philosophical view. The more honed this skill, the easier you find it to discover the important bits of a piece of philosophical prose. [*Caveat emptor*: as Austin said once of ordinary language philosophy, this feeling can be the first step in finding interesting parts of a philosophical text, but it certainly shouldn't be the last step. You need to go on and justify your feelings.]

Assessment

Test	Due date	Specifications	%
Short piece of writing	10 October in class	300-500 words long	15
Essay 1	7 November in class	500-1000 words long	15
Essay 2	19 December in class	1000-1500	20
Final exam	To be announced	To be announced	15
Presentations	Starting in week 5	Sign up for a date in week 2.	15
Participation	From week 1 to 15	Includes evidence of reading, homework, and attendance	20

Submission policy:

All material submitted must be typed and word-processed. Late submissions will only be considered if an extension has been agreed on *before* the deadline.

You must submit a copy of your work electronically on Turnitin via Moodle.

Plagiarism

For the university's plagiarism policy which will be strictly observed, see:

<http://www.provost.bilkent.edu.tr/procedures/AcademicHonesty.htm>

Grading criteria

I will make an overall judgment of the quality of your work, but in forming my judgment I will pay particular attention to the following criteria:

Content: Knowledge and understanding of the relevant texts, facts, philosophical concepts and theories.

Argument: Quantity and quality of reasoning used in support of, or criticism of the positions discussed; consistency and coherence; depth of analysis.

Clarity: Clarity of essay structure and verbal expression; succinctness; use of language; and quality of presentation.

Independence: The extent to which you think for yourself, rather than regurgitating what you have read or heard; imaginative use of examples.

Relevance: Have you answered the question as set? Is everything you have written relevant to the conclusion you wish to establish (whether in support of it, or as an objection to be answered)?

Weekly Syllabus

Week	Date	Texts	topic
1	11/09	Perictione and Diotima (Readings)	'What do philosophers do?'
2	15/09 18/09	Finish week 1's work Apology (Moodle)	How to read a philosophical text
3	22/09	Finish Apology No new reading	Explain assessment No class Friday.
4	29/09 02/10	In class writing exercises on the texts.	Short piece of writing due Friday in class.
5	06/10 09/10	St Anselm Aquinas (Readings)	Arguments Good and Bad <u>Presentations begin.</u>
6	13/10 16/10	Russell (Readings)	
7	20/10 23/10	In class writing exercises.	Essay 1 due Friday in class.
8	27/10	Theaetetus (Moodle)	Knowledge No class Friday
9	03/11 06/11	Gettier (Readings)	
10	10/11 13/11	Descartes's Meditation 1 (Readings) Marie de Gournay (Readings)	Skepticism
11	20/11	Descartes's Meditation 2 "Dreams for Sale"	No class Tuesday
12	24/11 27/11	Hume Enquiry (Readings)	Causation
13	01/12 04/12	Mary Shepherd on Causation (Readings)	
14	08/12 11/12	Dennet "Where am I"? (Readings)	Essay 2 due Friday in class.
15	15/12 18/12	Last Presentations.	

How to interpret a philosophical text

When you present a piece of philosophical work, you will need to *evaluate* the material you have been reading. However, you can only evaluate something if you understand it.

In order to understand a philosophical text, you need to be able to answer two questions:

1. What is the author saying, i.e. what does he/she want you to believe?
2. How is the author defending his/her view? What reasons does he/she give you to believe that this view is right?

To answer question 1 you need to identify the author's *thesis* (there might be more than one in the text, but always work on one at a time).

A thesis is a statement of what the author wants the reader to believe is the case.

e.g. "There is no such thing as a just war"

"Plato's claim that the soul has three parts is not defensible because it is psychologically unsound".

When you state a thesis, whether your own or your interpretation of someone else's, must always be stated clearly and succinctly, i.e. one sentence long rather than one paragraph. Try to distinguish the actual thesis statement from contextual information the author gives.

e.g.: "Much has been argued in favour of a distinction between just and unjust wars", "One of the most interesting arguments in Plato's Republic is that for the division of the soul". These remarks are **not** part of the thesis.

You should also try to find a quotation from the text in which the author states the thesis. However, this may be difficult if the author does not write in a clear and succinct manner. The thesis may be broken down and spread over several sentences. In this case you may quote parts from each of the sentences and link them this way:

"part 1 [...] part 2 [...] part 3 [...]."

The thesis statement may also be ambiguous. This means that the sentence which expresses the thesis may have several distinct meanings. The author may only intend to mean one thing, or he/she may intend to mean more.

For example Plato says in the Republic that it is always in one's interest to be just. However, if one reads the entire text, it appears that being just means either of two things. The first is the conventional meaning, i.e. to treat others fairly. The second is a Platonic meaning, i.e. achieving harmony of the soul. One could argue that it is possible to achieve harmony without treating others fairly. By disambiguating Plato's thesis, we find that there is a need for further argument. Is Plato right to believe that conventional justice and psychic harmony always go together? If so does he give reasons?

This is how you can end up 'doing philosophy' by identifying a thesis.

When you state the thesis in your own words (which you must always do), you must do so clearly even if the author doesn't

To answer question 2 you need to identify the author's **argument**.

An **argument**, in the critical thinking sense, is a set of statements which together provide good reasons for believing something. The reasons are called **premises**, and what you give reasons for is called the **conclusion**.

Hence, when asked to identify an argument in a text, you should identify a set of statements some of which you will call premises and one of which you will call the conclusion.

Your answer to the question 'what is the argument presented?' should look like this:

Premise 1:
Premise 2:
(Premise 3, 4, etc:.....)
Conclusion:.....

Each statement, premise or conclusion, should be **no longer than one short sentence**.

There are ways to recognise which part of a text constitutes premises and which part is a conclusion: look for **argument indicating expressions**.

There are two kinds:

Conclusion Indicating Expressions - **CIE**

Premise Indicating Expressions - **PIE**

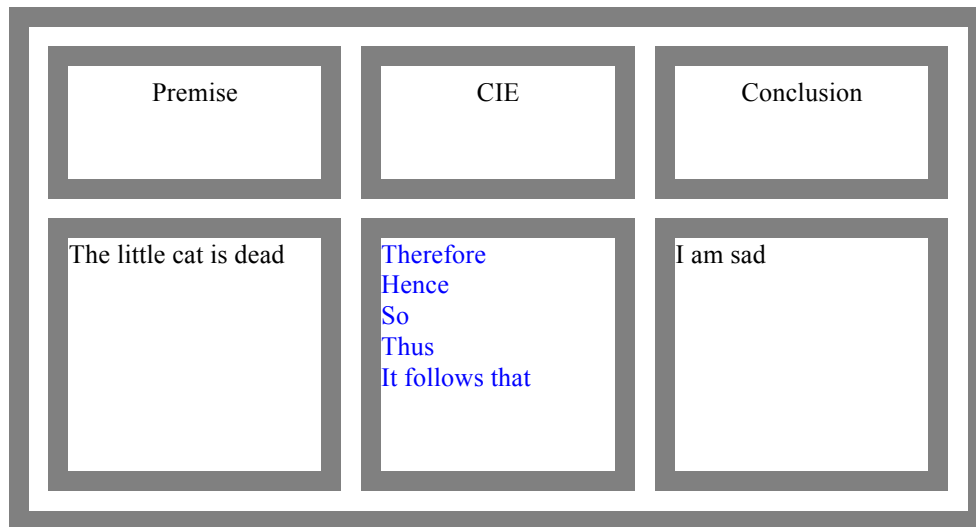
When you see a CIE, it probably means that a premise comes before it, and a conclusion follows:

Premise 1 (and 2 and 3) CIE Conclusion

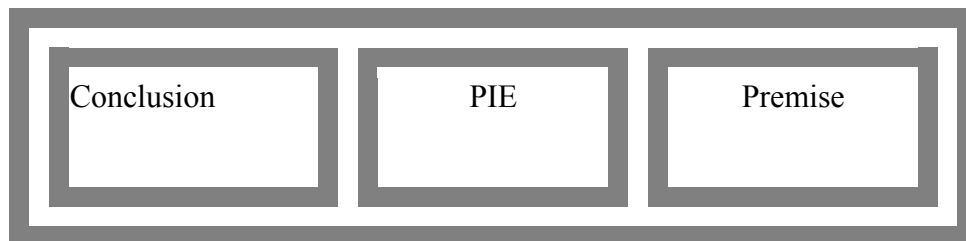
When you see a PIE, it probably means that a conclusion comes before it, and a premise follows:

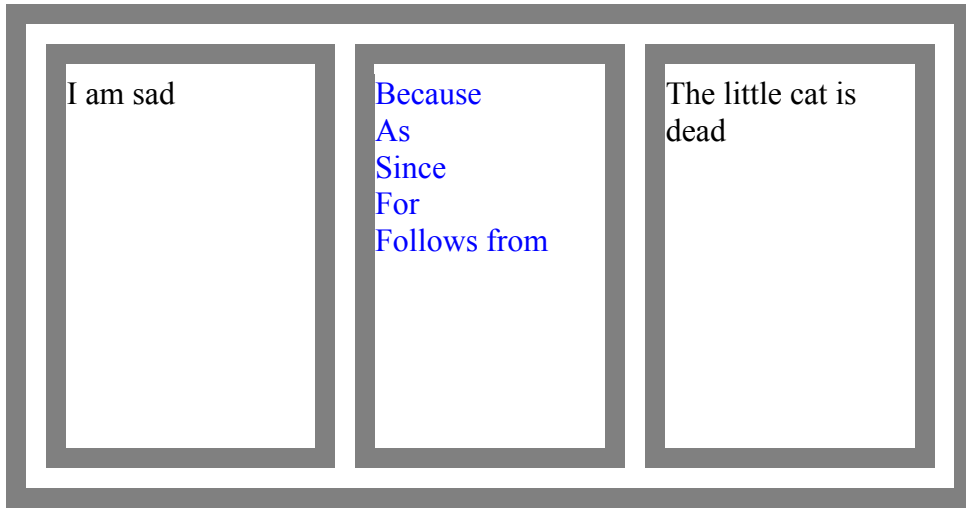
Conclusion PIE Premise 1 (and 2 and 3).

Here are some CIE:



Here are some PIE:





Note:

Not all written or spoken arguments contain argument indicating expressions. Sometimes you just need to look at the meaning and context of a set of statements to realise that it is an argument.

The expressions listed above do not always indicate arguments.

E.g. the word 'so' in the sentence 'this is so boring' does not indicate an argument.

Again, you need to look at the meaning, context, and **use your common sense**.

Weekly homework

The following pages give you the weekly readings and homework.

The texts are all in Perry Bratman and Fischer (eds) *Introduction to Philosophy*, expect for the first two which I will distribute in week 1. Please make sure you bring the text book to every class, as we will be working on the texts in class.

You should read the specified texts before coming to class and also try and prepare answers to the questions in the spaces provided on this coursepack. You should bring the coursepack (with your answers) to class every week.

Your answers to the coursepack questions should be in (short) note form. You will be asked to discuss them in class in small groups and in short, individual presentations.

Not doing the homework will lower your participation grade significantly.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TEXTS WITH YOU IN CLASS. YOU SHOULD HAVE READ AT LEAST SOME OF THE TEXTS BEFORE YOUR WEDNESDAY MORNING CLASS.

What do Philosophers do?

Reading: Diotima's speech from Plato's Symposium, and Perictione I's "On the Harmony of Women".

AIM: By the end of the week, we want to have as clear as possible a statement of the nature and purpose of philosophical inquiry, as well as some idea of its scope.

Read both texts and write down:

- what they have in common.
- what makes them different.

Try and explain in your own words what the philosopher (Diotima, Perictione) is doing in each case, and what you think they are trying to achieve.

In each case, what is the main claim (thesis) the philosopher is trying to defend? How are they defending it?

Process review:

How did we use the texts in our discussion?

When philosophers write they usually state a **thesis**, i.e. what they believe is the right answer to a philosophical question.

Then they argue for that thesis, offering the reader a set of premises, which taken together lead to a conclusion.

These arguments can be **sound** or **unsound**, that is, they can be **valid**, and their premises be true (sound), or they can be valid and their premises false, or **invalid** and their premises true (unsound in both cases).

Philosophers also often anticipate possible **objections** to their arguments and attempt to **reply** to them.

When you write a philosophical essay, you should try to do the same.

When you read a philosophical text, you should try to think of further objections and ask yourself whether they are answerable from the point of view of the author.

What did you find particularly problematic or difficult? Write it down here and look again in a month's time to see if you still have the same problems.

Socrates as a horse-fly – *The Apology*.



Reading comprehension questions:

- 1) (19b): What is Socrates first accused of?
- 2) (21a-23b) Why did Socrates' friend, Chaerophon, go to Delphi, and what were the consequences of what he found there?
- 3) What is Meletus' second accusation and how does Socrates respond to it?
- 4) (29c-d) What is Socrates' reply to the hypothetical demand that he give up philosophy?
- 5) (30d-e) How does Socrates see his divinely assigned role in Athens?

Discussion questions:

- 1) Ancient skeptics believed the following:

The truth cannot be apprehended – the world is too obscure. So in order to achieve peace of mind, we should give up the search for knowledge.

Do you think this is what Socrates believe in the *Apology*? If so why? If not what are the main differences between Socrates's view and the skeptic view?

- 2) Why does Socrates 'urge the Athenians to set their thoughts on goodness'? If he is the wisest but does not know what goodness is, then what good will it do the Athenians (who are less wise) to think about it? If he does know what goodness is, then, given that they are not so wise as him, why doesn't he tell them?

Does he mean that :

A – more inquirers will, together, succeed where Socrates on his own failed.

B – what matters is not finding answers but asking questions.

C – something else?

Argue for your answers and give examples.

Bonus question:

Read the passage from Christine de Pizan: is Socrates' life active or passive? Is philosophy active or passive?

Arguing for the existence of God

Reading: St Anselm and Aquinas.

AIM: You will consolidate your understanding of the use of arguments in philosophy, to analyze them in texts you read and construct them yourself.

Philosophy involves arguing for one's views rather than asserting them, and looking carefully at arguments for other views.

Example of an assertion:

Candidate: 'You should vote for me!'

For the above to become an argument rather than an assertion, the candidate should offer reasons for our consideration : i.e. persuade us that we should vote for her.

Terminology:

'argument': a proposition along with some reasons for accepting that proposition.

'conclusion': the proposition for which reasons are offered.

'premise': reasons given for a conclusion.

'valid': an argument is valid when it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false.

'sound': and argument is sound when it is valid and has true premises.

An example of a valid but unsound argument:

If I roll a double six then Elvis is alive.

I rolled a double six

Therefore Elvis is alive.

The form is fine but the premises are false.

An example of a sound argument:

If you miss class a lot you will get a low attendance grade

You've missed class a lot

Therefore you will get a low attendance grade.

It is valid (same form as the one above) and the premises are true.

How to identify and argument in a text: Argument Indicating Expressions.

PC expressions

Premise – argument indicating expression – conclusion

therefore, so, thus, hence

CP expressions

Conclusion – argument indicating expression – Premise

since, follows from, for.

Examples:

You should vote for me since if you don't , the extreme right will probably get in and that will be a disaster.

P1
P2
C

If I'm not elected I will not be in a position to give your brother a job. So you should vote for me.

P1
P2
C

In each of these, use the argument indicating expression to identify the premises and the conclusion. In the second argument premise 2 is missing. Can you guess what it is?

More PC expressions:

More CP expressions:

St Anselm and Thomas Aquinas on the Ontological Argument.

AIM: To get some practice with objections and replies.

- 1) First read St Anselm's text carefully and try to reconstruct the argument in terms of premises and conclusion.
- 2) St Anselm considers objections to his argument and attempts to reply to them. What are the objections? What are the replies?
- 3) Read the Summa Theologica
- 4) Do you think Aquinas's arguments are more persuasive than Augustine's?
- 5) Reformulate in your own words one of Aquinas's arguments
- 6) Try and think of one or more other objections to the ontological argument.
- 7) Can you think of some good replies to your objections. If not, why do you think that is?

What is a bad Argument?

Reading: Russell.

AIM: Learn to recognise bad arguments and to understand what is wrong with them. Also: learn to avoid constructing bad arguments!

Bad arguments are also called fallacies and they fall in roughly three categories:

- 1) the invalid (formal fallacies)
- 2) the unconvincing
- 3) the rhetorical.

Here are a few examples of fallacies in each of these categories.

1) Formal Fallacies.

Affirming the consequent:

If P then Q	If you cross the bridge to Rumeli Hr you will be in Europe
Q	You are in Europe
Therefore P	You must have crossed the bridge to Rumeli Hr.

Denying the antecedent:

If P then Q	If you cross the bridge to Rumeli Hr you will be in Europe
Not P	You did not cross the bridge to Rumeli Hr
Therefore not Q	Therefore you are not in Europe.

The examples demonstrates that the forms are invalid. Clearly one could be in Europe without crossing that bridge. (e.g. one could be born in Europe, or fly to Europe bypassing Istanbul altogether.)

Closely related are cases of the undistributed middle. Can you think of examples for these?

All Fs are G
n is G
Therefore n is F

All Fs are G

n is not F
Therefore n is not G.

2) The unconvincing

The best example of an argument that is valid but unconvincing is circularity or begging the question. This means that the conclusion is presupposed, or 'smuggled' in the premises.

A circular argument looks like this.

P
Therefore P.

Or like this

If Q then R
Not R
P
If S then T
S
Therefore P.

Example:

The minister is not guilty of taking bribes, for no honest man would do so and he is perfectly honest.

What is presupposed here?

Can you think of another example?

3) Rhetorical devices.

Ad hominem arguments:

An important person says P
Therefore P.

e.g. The pope says euthanasia is wrong
Therefore euthanasia is wrong.

Can you think of another example?

Bertrand Russell: “Why I am not a theist”

Russell presents five arguments for the conclusion that god exists and argues that none of them are persuasive.

For each argument, can you:

- 1) Set out the premises and the conclusion of the argument Russell is examining, (note that conclusion is almost certainly going to be 'therefore god exists!')
- 2) Explain in your own words why Russell thinks the argument is a bad one.
- 3) Think up a different objection to the argument.

Defining Knowledge

Reading: Theaetetus 144d-152e (You can use either the extracts in any printed edition or the text uploaded on moodle pp. 1-35) and Gettier.

Aim: Understand the basic problems regarding our concept of knowledge.

Epistemology: the study of the concepts of knowledge and belief.

Three kinds of knowledge:

Knowledge how: Max knows how to ride a bicycle.

Knowledge by acquaintance: I know the writer of this book, I met her at a conference.

Propositional knowledge: I know that a triangle has three sides.

Most of the literature on questions relating to knowledge focus on propositional knowledge.

To define knowledge, we need to find its necessary and sufficient conditions:

Reminder:

'x is a necessary condition for y' means that if y is true then x is true.

'x is a sufficient condition for y' means that if x is true then y is true.

The text:

Introduction:

Read carefully 145d-146 a (13-15): What do you think the philosophical question Socrates and Theaetetus are about to debate is?

148e-151d (23-31) What does Socrates mean when he says that he is a midwife? Compare to his claim in the Apology that he is a horsefly. What does it tell us about his conception of philosophy?

151e (31): “knowledge is simply perception”.

152a (31-32): “Man is the measure of all things”.

Does Protagoras's view really mean the same as Theaetetus's thesis? Try and find illustrations for each of them and see whether they are really interchangeable.

Epistemic relativism: All truth is relative.

Thesis: there is no such thing as detached, objective perspective on truth. Every perspective is subjective, culturally, psychologically, socially determined – hence different for each person,

society, culture.

152d-e (34): Heraclitus and the theory of flux.
Nothing 'is' but everything is in the process of becoming.

What is the relationship between the flux theory and Protagoras's relativism?
(hint: is the flux theory a theory about knowledge?)

Refutation of relativism:

If 'all truths are relative' is absolutely true, then it is false, as there is at least one truth that is not relative but absolute, i.e. the statement of relativism.
So relativism is self-defeating (if true, then false).

Question:

Do you think epistemic relativism has any merits at all? If so what are they?

Knowledge as true belief.

Theaetetus's first attempt at a definition of knowledge as perception fails.
In the second part of the dialogue, he tries to define knowledge as true belief.

Is something being a true belief a necessary and sufficient condition for it to be knowledge?

Necessary conditions:

Only a belief can count as knowledge. Knowledge is a kind of propositional attitude, i.e. a way our mind has of relating to the world. It is more specifically a kind of belief (rather than a kind of desire or emotion).

Secondly, one cannot know something which is not the case. 'I know that P' entails that P is true.

So something has to be a true belief in order for it to count as knowledge – it is a necessary condition.

Sufficient conditions:

But it's perfectly possible to have a true belief about something and yet not know it.
Imagine you are playing dice and before you throw you say: 'I bet I'm going to get a double six. In fact I'm pretty sure I am'. Then you roll and you get a double six: you were right! But you didn't know you were going to. It was just luck, and luck plus true belief don't add up to knowledge.

Can you think of other examples which show that being a true belief is not a sufficient condition for knowledge?

Knowledge as justified true belief

Study Gettier's case 1 carefully:

Smith is justified in believing

a) Jones will get the promotion and Jones has ten coins in his pocket.

So he is justified in believing

b) The man who will get the promotion has ten coins in his pocket.

But the otherwise reliable boss who told Smith that Jones would get the job changes his mind and gives the job to Smith. Smith also happens, by chance, to have ten coins in his pocket. So (b) turns out to be true. But Smith did not *know* (b).


Other examples:

You walk passed a clock which has been telling you the time correctly for as long as you can remember. It says that it's 9.55. So you are justified in believing that it is in fact 9.55. But it turns out that the clock stopped for the very first time, and that it happened 24 hours ago exactly (i.e. at 9.55 on the previous day). So you don't really know that the time is 9.55, even though it is, and you have very good reasons to believe that it is.

You buy a lottery ticket and you believe that you will not win. Given the numbers of tickets sold each day, your belief that you will not win is extremely well justified. The probability of your winning is close to zero. Then it turns out you're right and you don't win. But did you know you would not win?

In each of these cases, the evidence for the belief is highly reliable, but not infallible. This is why it is possible for the belief to turn out to be true for different reasons.

The question we need to ask is do we need evidence to be infallible for a justified true belief to count as knowledge?

<p>EPISTEMOLOGY COMICS</p> <p>If I say "Guys, I know I'm rad", what am I saying? what does it actually mean to KNOW something? Philosophers have struggled with this for ages!</p> 	<p>Luckily the answer is super easy and they should have come up with it sooner!</p> 	<p>Knowledge of anything, radness included, comes about if three conditions are met: that this thing is true, that I believe it to be true, and that I have a JUSTIFIED cause for this belief! Perhaps my justification of radness is that I've been shot out of a cannon onto a motorbike, which is extremely rad. When these three conditions are met, then I've got what's called a Justified True Belief, and that, my friends, is what knowledge is!</p> 
<p>Okay, so we're hanging out, and I say "T-Rex, I'm gonna go nap in your bed."</p> <p>I say, "dude, feel free!"</p> 	<p>However, once in your room I startle a sleepy murderer, who without alarming you, quietly murders me, stuffs me in the closet, and then goes back to nappy times - in your bed!! A few minutes later you say "Nice. An orange dude is sleeping in my bed".</p> <p>Clearly, this is justified, and it may even be true.</p> 	<p>But only if the murderer was orange! Don't you see? It's sheer luck that this murderer was coloured to make your belief true. Are you really going to call random chance "knowledge"? Utahraptor!!</p> <p>Please don't get murdered in my bedroom, Utahraptor</p> 

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Knowledge and Skepticism

Reading: Descartes's *Meditations* 1 and 2 (use either a print text or the text uploaded on moodle).

AIM: Investigate the need for indubitability in knowledge, and study some central arguments in epistemology.

The Method of the Doubt:

Rejecting every belief that can be doubted in order to find beliefs which are certain.

This does not amount to claiming that beliefs which can be doubted are false.

Why? Because only beliefs which are certain (indubitable) can serve as a foundation for the sciences.

(note: as a foundation for sciences, not as scientific knowledge itself – D. believes metaphysics is the foundation for science, and that metaphysical principles must be certain, but not, unlike the Scholastics, that scientific facts must be deduced from certain principles.)

So the doubt is 'systematic' in the sense that our beliefs are grouped and put to the doubt one by one.

D. uses different arguments in order to put different groups of beliefs to the doubt.

D. shows how each argument works for a particular group of beliefs, but fails for another group. He then gives another argument for that group.

Ancient Skepticism:

A moral philosophy – having strong beliefs is what gets people in trouble. Luckily, it is easy to put yourself in a position where you don't have strong beliefs, as you can always doubt that what you believe is true.

(the Stoics believed that strong emotions were the problem, and tried to find ways of curing us of them).

So the Sceptics used belief avoidance strategies, i.e. arguments to the effect that we cannot know anything worth knowing.

This is not what Descartes is doing – he is trying to establish what there is that is worth knowing. But he owes much to the Sceptics for the development of his method.

The illusion argument:

This applies to our sensory perception of objects which are vague or distant.

Argument:

We are sometimes misled by the senses.

We should not trust something which sometimes misleads us.

Therefore we should not trust the senses.

Objection: But the senses only mislead in specific circumstances, i.e. when perceived objects are small,

or distant.

The Dream argument:

This applies to perceptions in ideal conditions.

We sometimes dream that we perceive things close up and clearly.

If we are dreaming then we are not perceiving anything.

Therefore we should not trust sense perception even in ideal conditions.

Objection:

But even in my dreams, there are some things which do not change, such as mathematical truths.

The evil demon argument:

This applies to beliefs acquired independently of perceptual experience.

Argument:

There could be a demon deceiving us all the time (for all we know).

The demon could even deceive us about logic, and mathematical truths.

Therefore all our beliefs could in principle be false.

Some questions:

Can you think of any good objections to the evil demon argument?

Which of the three arguments do you find most convincing?

Another Skeptic:

Read the short text by Marie de Gournay, below.

How is she using the arguments of skepticism? What conclusion is she attempting to defend? What does her use of skepticism have in common (if anything) with Descartes's?

Marie Gournay (1565-1645)'s use of skepticism.

The Skeptical Challenge of Nurture to the Argument from Nature

Women surely achieve a high degree of excellence less often than men do, but it is a marvel that the lack of good instruction, and even the abundance of bad speech and teaching, does not make matters worse by keeping them from achieving excellence at all. Is there a greater difference between men and women than among women themselves, depending on the education they have had, depending on whether they were reared in the city or in a village, or depending on their National origin? And why couldn't an education or diet in practical affairs and Letters, equal to that of men, fill in the gap which usually appears between the minds of men and their own? For, nurture is so important that even a single branch of culture, that is to say, social interaction, which French and English women have abundant opportunities to engage in, while Italian women have none, is such that the latter are, by and large, far surpassed by the former. I say "by and large" because in particular cases Italian ladies sometimes prevail: we did take from them two Queens, to whose wisdom France is greatly obliged. Why, really, couldn't nurture make a decisive contribution to filling in the gap that we perceive between the intellectual faculties of men and of women, considering that in this example the worst surpasses the best with the assistance of a single part, namely, as I said, social interaction and conversation? For, in nature the Italian air is more subtle and suitable for refining the mind, as is clear in the case of their men when compared with Frenchmen and Englishmen.

(Gournay, *The Equality of Men and Women*)

From Eileen O'Neill "Justifying the Inclusion of Women in Our History of Philosophy: The Case of Marie de Gournay", in Alcoff and Kittay 2007 *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, p.29.

Cogito as solution to the doubt:

Reading: Descartes' *Meditation 2*.

Do we have any evidence for believing that the world is as it seems? How can we move from the content of our experiences to knowledge of the underlying structure of the world which cause these experiences?

The Demon can fool me about everything- but he is fooling me, and something which does not exist cannot be fooled. So if he is fooling me, then I exist!

Do you think this is a good solution to the doubt?

Do you think that if we reconstruct the foundations of knowledge starting from the cogito we will end up with the roughly the same beliefs as before?

Is the Cogito Deduction or Intuition?

Two acts of the intellect:

Intuition: by which we gain initial certainties that make deduction possible. “The indubitable conception of a clear and attentive mind which proceeds solely from the light of reason”

Deduction: inference that something follows necessarily from other propositions which are known with certainty.

Contrast those two passages:

And when I said that the proposition I am thinking, therefore I exist is the first and most certain of all to occur to anyone who philosophizes in an orderly way, I did not in saying that deny that one must first know what thought, existence and certainty are, and that it is impossible that that which thinks should not exist, and so forth. But because these are very simple notions, and ones which on their own provide us with no knowledge of anything that exists, I did not think they needed to be listed. *Principles*, Part I, art. 10.

And when we become aware that we are thinking beings, this is a primary notion that is not derived by means on any syllogism. When someone says, ‘I am thinking, therefore I am, or exist’, he does not deduce existence from thought by a syllogism, but, recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind. This is clear from the fact that if he were deducing it by means of a syllogism, he would have to have had previous knowledge of the major premise ‘Everything which thinks is or exists’; yet in fact he learns it from experiencing in his own case that it is impossible that he should think without existing. *Reply to Mersenne*, Second set.

Cartesian Science Fiction

“Dreams for Sale” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhPm6ybc0uo&feature=youtu.be>

1) Watch the short film posted on Moodle (*Dreams for sale*, 1985 episode of the Twilight Zone)

In Meditation I, Descartes suggests that we ought to be skeptical about 1) whether we might not be dreaming right now, and 2) whether the world as we think we know it might not be an illusion created by an evil demon. What sort of skepticism does the film suggest? How does it differ (if it does) from 1 and 2?

Can you think of other examples – in films or literature – of the same sort of skepticism?

2) Descartes’ appeal to skepticism is part of an argument for the conclusion that we need more secure foundations for our knowledge. Do you think that the skepticism suggested by the film also helps us draw certain conclusions? Are the same as Descartes’ conclusion?

You should come to class prepared to discuss your answers to the questions.

This means that I may ask you to give a first answer to one of the questions, or you may be required to comment on another student's answer, as well as participate in the general discussion.

Hume and Shepherd on Causation

1) Read Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section II "Of the Origins of Ideas"
What sort of things are ideas and impressions? Try to find Hume's definitions and examples, then explain in your words and give your own examples.

2) Read Section IV
How do you know that the sun will rise tomorrow? What is your reasoning behind the belief that it will? Does Hume think it is sound reasoning?

3) Read Section V, part I
What does Hume mean in the following: "Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses [...]" (continue to the end of that paragraph).

4) Read the two short texts by Mary Shepherd (at the end of the course pack).
Is Shepherd's analysis of Hume's argument accurate? Can you match it to the text you've read by Hume? What is her objection? Do you think it's a good objection?

Where am I?

Reading: Dennett.

Read these pages carefully and try to answer the following questions:

- 1) What reason is there for thinking that I am wherever my brain is?
- 2) What reason is there for thinking that I am wherever my sense organs (and in particular my eyes) are?
- 3) Which is the correct answer to the question 'where am I'?
- 4) Does Dennett's discussion above suggest that the answer 'I am wherever my sense organs are' implies that I am not to be identified with any material thing?

Read from 'When I found the warhead...' to 'I had lost all contact with my body' before you answer the next question:

- 5) If it is an illusion now for Dennett to think he is wherever his body is, was it an illusion to think so earlier when his brain and body were still in radio contact?

Jack Woods' Essay Writing Techniques

1. Use clear, simple prose. There is a temptation in philosophy to try to sound deep, grand, sophisticated, or literary. Resist! These sorts of touches come later. Professional philosophers should also aim for clear, simple prose. But often they fail at this. It is partially your job to make up for their failure by explaining their point clearly and simply in your own words. For example, if their name is “the highest one”, do not write “that than which no higher can be conceived” as (a) this does not mean the same thing and (b) makes the reader do far too much work.
2. Less is more. Do not attempt to kick out the chocks from underneath, say, Rationalism or Theism in your first paper. Rather, pick a small issue which makes a major point and go after it with tweezers and a scalpel. Be clear about what the issue is, what is plausible about some solution to it, what is not and then decide on the basis of reasons whether or not this solution is tenable. I guarantee you that you will learn far more about the entire topic in this way.
3. Give examples. Philosophers love examples. A freshly thought-up accurate example of your own is incontrovertible proof that you understand something. For every claim you make, give an example to illustrate it (within reason!) This will make me happy.
4. Similarly with counterexamples. Whenever you make a claim, think about how someone might respond (again, within reason!). Then modify your position or include a pair of responses and your rebuttal.
5. Minimize long quotations---though be generous with citations to the work that you draw on, both explicitly and implicitly. It will serve you better in the long run to be able to paraphrase arguments in your own words. An eye for when to include a quote and when to paraphrase is a valuable and difficult thing to develop. Start early.
6. Be generous. Most philosophers are not left speechless at objections; try to respond on the behalf of the person or view you are raising problems for. Again, among the valuable skills you should endeavor to develop is the sense for what is appealing about a view that you find false. It is a good assumption that the people we will read are NOT STUPID. Do them the service of believing it of them.
7. Keep the structure simple. If you are arguing that Q on the basis of P, then structure your essay thus: I will argue that Q because P. Here is an argument that Q on the basis of P. I am arguing Q on the basis of P. Here are objections to Q because of P or just to Q. These objections don't work. I am rebutting criticism of my thesis: Q on the basis of P. In this essay, I have argued that Q on the basis of P and then addressed some criticisms of this claim. The end. This might sound too simple. It is not. Philosophy can be incredibly difficult; it is thus important to be as clear as possible as to what you are doing while you do it.
8. Finally, everything in your essay should be aimed at establishing your conclusion. Do not waste words. If it doesn't support your thesis, have to do with an objection to it, or serve to inform the reader where they are in the paper, delete it. Except your name. Keep this at the top left of the first page.

See also Angela Mendelovici's Prezi on how to write a philosophy essay:

http://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/

Presentations guidelines

Each one of you will give one presentation in the second half of the semester. This is an important skill that you must begin to practice as soon as possible, and which will culminate in your senior thesis presentation at the end of your final year.

The presentations will be short, and as long as you stick to the guidelines below, you can expect a good (or very good) grade.

1. Your presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes.
2. At the beginning of your presentation, you should clearly identify **the main argument** of the text you are discussing, together with its **conclusion**.
(Note: you must **not** summarize the text, paragraph by paragraph: if you do this, you will be penalized).
3. You should then talk in some more details about the aspect of the argument you find most interesting, e.g., explain how the author supports a particular premise, which examples s/he uses to illustrate the argument, which examples you think s/he could use, which assumptions s/he needs to make, other argument s/he is offering as a contrast to her/his own, etc.
4. Identify what you see as a weakness of the argument, and if you can, offer a solution for strengthening the argument (in other words, give an objection and a reply).
5. Be prepared to answer questions about your presentations. This might involve going over some of the material you have already presented in a different way – to clarify; or considering objections to your interpretation, or argument: you can reply to these if you can, or you can simply ask the objector more details about their objections and think about it (there is no shame in not having an answer straightaway!).
6. Conversely, be prepared to ask questions to those who are presenting. You should take notes during a presentation, and either ask the presenter to clarify something you didn't understand about the text or their presentation, object to something they have said (politely!), or help support their argument/interpretation by offering a further argument or a helpful example.
7. It goes without saying that whether you are presenting or listening, you need to have read the relevant text(s) before hand!