

PHI171 - 3 credits

PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

time & venue

instructor Marcello Di Bello

hybrid: Tu 12:30-1:45 in C-349

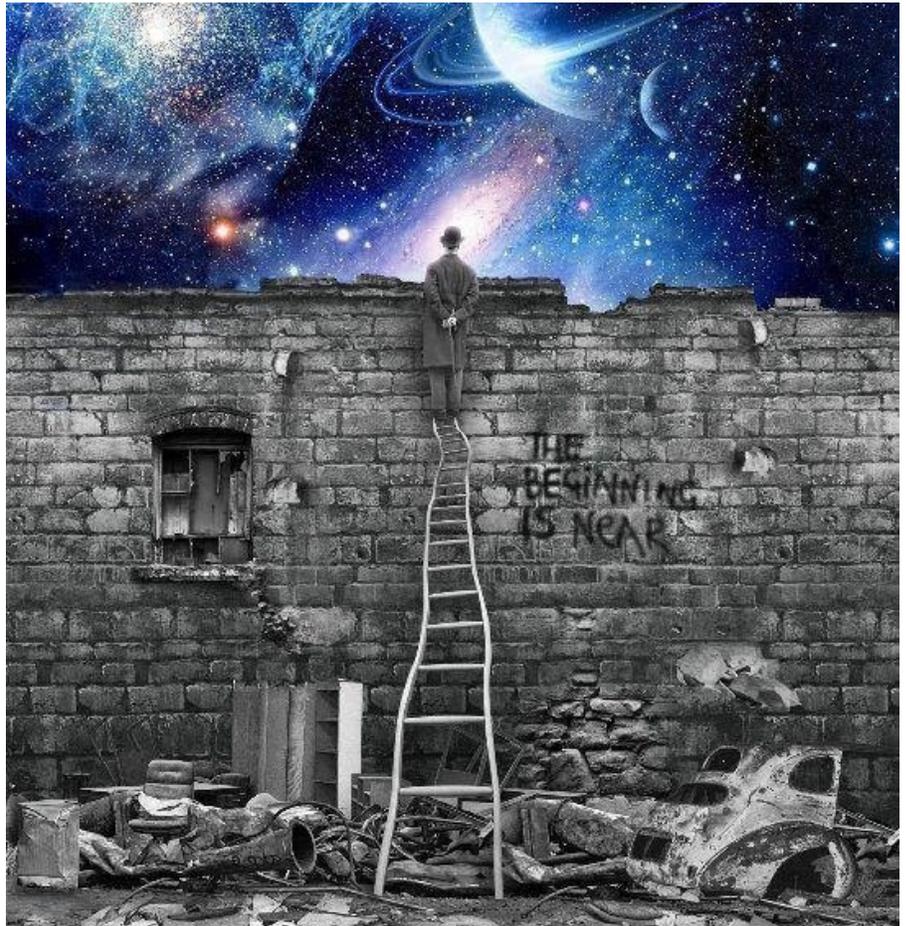
e-mail marcello.dibello@lehman.cuny.edu

on-line: any day on Slack

office hrs Tu 5:00-6:00 in C-365

What is philosophy?

Philosophy is about exploring deep and fundamental questions about ourselves and the world. What is reality made up of? Does God exist? Can we know anything at all? Are we only matter or do we have an immaterial soul? What is consciousness? How can we be happy? How can we tell right from wrong? Are we really free to decide what to do? And many more. We will study some of these questions. (See course schedule below for details.)



But do not expect clear answers! More than answers, philosophy offers a method of investigation – a method based on sustained reflection, reasoned argument and rational dialogue. If you want to know more, consider taking this course.

Will this course be useful for me?

This depends on what you mean by ‘useful.’ Since it emphasizes reasoning and reflection, philosophy helps to unravel, clarify and if necessary criticize what we often leave implicit – the reasons for why we think what we think. Some students find that taking philosophy improves their reading and writing skills, and also sharpens their analytical and problem-solving skills. Some students also find that taking philosophy helps with preparing for the LSAT while applying for Law School.

Avoid Blackboard, use Slack!

Course materials, videos, readings, assignments, discussions, etc. will be on Slack. This course does not use Blackboard. If you are enrolled in this course, you should have received an email asking you to sign up to Slack for the course phil71. If you have not done it yet, do it right now. You can use Slack to communicate with your classmates and ask questions. You can also send messages directly to me via Slack.

Is there a textbook?

There is no textbook. All the course materials will be shared on Slack free of charge.

Is this a hybrid or an on-line course?

There are two versions of this course: on-line and hybrid. If you are taking the **on-line version**, you don’t have to physically come to class. You should participate in the on-line discussions in Slack, study the course materials, readings and videos, and (electronically) hand in the assignments and exams when they are due.

If you are taking the **hybrid version**, you should participate in the on-line discussions in Slack, study the course materials, readings and videos, and (electronically) hand in the assignments and exams when they are due. But you should also come to class on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 1:45 pm in C-349.

How will I be graded?

Your final grade will depend on:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| - five homework assignments | 10% each, 40% total
[drop one with lowest grade] |
| - one take-home midterm | 30% |
| - one take-home final | 30% |

Exams and assignments will be graded on a scale from 0 to 100. Here is the conversion from numbers to letter grades: A range: above 85; B range: between 85 and 70; C range: between 70 and 55; D range: between 55 and 40; F range: below 40.

What about participation?

Participation matters. You can participate in whichever way best suits you. You can ask questions in class or in the on-line discussions via Slack. You can come to office hours or send me emails. The more questions you ask, the better. Students who participate tend to do better because their work tends to be of better quality.

Is there a late submission policy?

If you hand in your work late, you will not get credit for it. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis if you can provide a well-documented reason for being late.

What if I am stuck?

Philosophy can be hard and it is normal to get stuck sometimes. Talk to me or your fellow classmates! I am here to help you succeed in this class. I am available during office hours, via email or direct messages in Slack. Don't be shy!

Are there tutoring services for this course?

The Academic Center for Excellence provides tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing. Please visit www.lehman.edu/issp or call 718-960-8175.

What is the schedule for this course?

Weeks 1 and 2
(Aug 27–Sept 9)

arguments

**assignment 1
due Sept 10**

Weeks 3, 4 and 5
(Sept 10–Sept 30)

god

**assignment 2
due Oct 1**

Weeks 6 and 7
(Oct 1–Oct 14)

midterm-and-review

NB: If you're taking the hybrid course, **no class** on **Oct 1** and **Oct 8**

**midterm exam
due Oct 15**

Weeks 8 and 9
(Oct 15–Oct 28)

puzzles-and-paradoxes

**assignment 3
due Oct 29**

Weeks 10, 11 and 12
(Oct 29–Nov 18)

responsibility-and-freedom

**assignment 4
due Nov 19**

Weeks 13, 14 and 15
(Nov 19–Dec 9)

time-travel

**assignment 5
due Dec 9**

Week 16
(Dec 10–Dec 16)

final-and-review

**final exam
due Dec 17**

Note that the schedule may change as the quarter progresses. For details about the readings, videos, assignments and exams, please check the channels in Slack.

I have a disability. Can you help me?

Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. For more info, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238, at 718-960-8441.