

Paradoxes
PHIL 499
Tuesday/Thursday 1-2:15
Jessica Pfeifer

Office: PAHB 462
Telephone: 410-455-2014
Email: pfeifer@umbc.edu

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:15-3:15 (or by appointment)
Course Room #: PAHB 456

Course Goals and Expectations:

The course will examine some of the central paradoxes that have and continue to puzzle philosophers. A classic example of a paradox is the liar's paradox: 'This sentence is false.' If it is true, then it is false; if it's false, then it's true. Paradoxes have not only led to puzzlement, but also to revolutions in thought about various philosophical issues, such as the nature of truth, meaning, metaphysics, knowledge, and space and time. Amongst the paradoxes the course will consider are logical paradoxes (such as the liar's paradox), paradoxes of space and time, paradoxes of meaning, paradoxes of rationality, and paradoxes of knowledge.

The goal of the course is to expose students to central issues associated with various paradoxes. The course also aims to help students hone their philosophical skills through reading professional articles about paradoxes, participating in class discussions, writing critical essays, and writing a longer research paper.

The course will consist of a combination of lecture and discussion. One cannot learn philosophy well without participating in discussion. In addition to discussion in class, students are encouraged to participate in the discussions on blackboard. I also strongly encourage you to make use of my office hours. If for some reason you cannot attend my scheduled office hours, appointments at other times can be arranged.

Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Total Grade
Essay 1	March 11	30%
Essay 2	April 15	30%
Essay 3	May 15	30%
Class Attendance and Participation		10%

Unless you have a very good excuse (serious illness, death in the family, etc.) and you notify me before the assignment is due, late assignments will be

graded down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late. For example, if your work earns an A-, but you turn in the essay 1 day late, you will receive a B+.

Class attendance and participation are required. One cannot learn philosophy well without participating in class discussion. Moreover, I will be presenting material in class that is not in the reading. If you miss a class, try to get another student's notes, and you are always welcome (and encouraged) to discuss the material with me. You will receive up to 7 of the 10 points for class discussion and up to 7 of the 10 points for participation, though the maximum total score for both is 10. Students are allowed up to 3 unexcused absences. More than that will result in a reduction in your Class Attendance grade of 0.5% for every additional day missed. In other words, if you have five unexcused absences, the maximum for the Class Attendance and Participation Grade would be 9%. Your participation grade will be determined by the quality, not just quantity, of your participation in the discussion. This requires coming to class prepared to discuss the material. Of course, you can't participate if you aren't in class!

Student Integrity:

UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the [UMBC Student Handbook](#), or the [Office of Undergraduate Education](#).

Disability Statement:

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. Student Support Services (SSS) is the UMBC department designated to:

- receive and maintain confidential files of disability-related documentation,
- certify eligibility for services,
- determine reasonable accommodations,
- develop with each student plans for the provision of such accommodations, and
- serve as a liaison between faculty members and students regarding disability-related issues.

If you have a disability and want to request accommodations, contact SSS in the Math/Psych Building, Room 213 or Academic IV-B wing Room 345 (or call 410-455-2459 or 410-455-3250). SSS will require you to provide appropriate documentation of disability and complete a Request for Services form available at

<http://my.umbc.edu/groups/sss>. If you require accommodations for this class, make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SSS-approved accommodations.

Schedule: (Subject to Revision)

Wk1: January 28: **Introduction to Course**

Wk2: February 2: **Hume's Problem of Induction**

- Hume *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV

February 4: **The Problem of Induction**

- Okasha: "Does the Problem of Induction Rest on a Quantifier-Shift Fallacy?" (Read only Sections IV and V)

Wk 3: February 9: **The Ravens Paradox**

- Goodman: "The New Riddle of Induction" pp. 70-72
- Good: "The White Shoe is a Red Herring"
- Hempel: "White Shoe; No Red Herring"

February 11: **The Grue Paradox**

- Goodman: "The New Riddle of Induction" pp. 72-83

Wk4: February 16: **The Grue Paradox: Goodman's Solution**

- Goodman: "Prospects for a Theory of Projection"

February 18: **The Grue Paradox: Continued**

- Davidson: 'Emeroses by other names'

The Monty Hall Problem (This is not a paradox)

- No Reading

Wk5: February 23: **The Lottery Paradox**

- Kyburg: "The Rule of Adjunction and Reasonable Inference"

February 25: **The Lottery Paradox**

- Nelkin: "The Lottery Paradox, Knowledge, and Rationality"

Wk6: March 1: **Sleeping Beauty Paradox**

- Elga: “Self-Locating Belief and the Sleeping Beauty Problem”
- Lewis: “Sleeping Beauty: Reply to Elga”

March 3: **Sleeping Beauty Paradox**

- Dorr: “Sleeping Beauty: in Defence of Elga”
- Bradley: “Sleeping Beauty: a note on Dorr's argument for 1/3”

Wk7: March 8: **The Surprise Exam/Unexpected Hanging Paradox**

- O’Conner: “Pragmatic Paradoxes”
- Scriven: “Paradoxical Announcements”

March 10: **The Surprise Exam/Unexpected Hanging Paradox**

- Quine: “On a So-Called Paradox”
- Ayer: “On a Supposed Antinomy”

****ESSAY 1 DUE MARCH 11****

Happy Spring Break!!! Enjoy!!!!

Wk8: March 22: **Newcomb’s Problem**

- Nozick: “Newcomb’s Problem and the Two Principles of Choice”

March 24: **Newcomb’s Problem**

- Bar-Hillel & Margalit: “Newcomb’s Problem Revisited”
- Schlesinger: “The Unpredictability of Free Choices”

Wk9: March 29: **Newcomb’s Problem and the Prisoners’ Dilemma**

- Lewis: “Prisoner’s Dilemma is a Newcomb Problem”

March 31: **The Unreality of Time**

- McTaggart: “The Unreality of Time”

Wk10: April 5: **Paradoxes of Time Travel**

- Lewis “The Paradoxes of Time Travel”

April 7: **Paradoxes of Time Travel**

- Grey: “Troubles with Time Travel”
- Dow: “The Case for Time Travel”

Wk11: April 12: **Zeno's Paradoxes**
 • Salmon: "A Contemporary Look at Zeno's Paradoxes"

 April 14: **Zeno's Paradoxes**
 • Salmon: "A Contemporary Look at Zeno's Paradoxes"

******ESSAY 2 DUE APRIL 15******

Wk12: April 19: **Moral Paradoxes**
 • Reading to be announced

 April 21: **Moral Paradoxes**
 • Reading to be announced

Wk13: April 26: **Paradox of Meaning**
 • Kripke: Chapter 2

 April 28: **Paradox of Meaning**
 • Kripke: Chapter 2-3

Wk14: May 3: **Paradox of Meaning**
 • Kripke: Chapter 3

 May 5: **The Liar Paradox**
 • No Reading

Wk15: May 10: **The Liar Paradox**
 • No Reading

******ESSAY 3 DUE MAY 15******