

# General Philosophy

## Preliminaries

1. **Logistics** Tutorials will take place in even-numbered weeks. For each tutorial I would like you to write an essay of around 1,500 words. Please email me your essay by 9.00 on the day of the tutorial at the latest, so that I have a chance to read it in advance. When emailing me your essay, I would appreciate it if you could include your name in the name of the document.
2. **Topics** We will cover four topics this term: knowledge, free will, personal identity, and God and evil. That leaves four topics to cover should you decide to continue with General Philosophy next term: scepticism, induction, perception, and mind and body.
3. **Reading** For each topic I have listed six or seven texts to read. Aim to read a majority of the texts listed for a given topic in time for the tutorial; do not worry if you do not have time to read all of them. I recommend approaching the texts in roughly the order I have listed them. It is important that as you read you take high-quality notes from which you will later be able to revise. You will be better-off in the long-run reading fewer texts slowly while taking high-quality notes than reading more texts quickly without taking high-quality notes.
4. **Writing** I recommend reading Rachel Fraser's helpful guides "Essay Writing Instructions" and "What Not to Do" before writing your first essay, available here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1V-fuU89qX-JZAXVu3V3zWS1dQNz0bjQd>.

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## Week 2: Knowledge

ESSAY QUESTION: Is knowledge justified true belief? If not, what else might it be?

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Michael Hannon, "Knowledge, Concept of" in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2021).

Edmund L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" in *Analysis* Vol.23 no.6 (1963), pp.121-123.

Alvin Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing" in *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol.64 no.12 (1967), pp.357-372.

Robert Nozick, "Knowledge" in his *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems" in *Philosophical Quarterly* Vol.44 no.174 (1994), pp.65-73.

Edward Craig, "The Practical Explication of Knowledge" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol.87 (1986-87), pp.211-226.

Jennifer Nagel, "Knowledge as a Mental State" in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* Vol.4 (2013), pp.275-310.

## Week 4: Free Will

ESSAY QUESTION: "I am morally responsible for my actions only when I could have acted otherwise. But it is never the case that I could have acted otherwise. So I am never morally responsible for my actions." Is this a good argument?

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Galen Strawson, "Free Will" in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2011).

Peter Van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism" in *Philosophical Studies* Vol.27 no.3 (1975), pp.185-199.

Galen Strawson, "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" in *Philosophical Studies* Vol.75 no.1 (1994), pp.5-24.

Harry Frankfurt, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" in *Journal of Philosophy* Vol.66 no.23 (1969), pp.829-839.

Daniel Dennett, *Freedom Evolves* (London: Penguin, 2003), Ch.3 "Thinking About Determinism" [or this lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwbnGqOrAEM>].

Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" in his *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (Oxford: Routledge, 2008), pp.1-28.

Susan Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" in Ferdinand Schoeman ed., *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.46-62.

## Week 6: Personal Identity

ESSAY QUESTION: Am I the same person as I was yesterday because I am psychologically continuous with who I was yesterday, or for some other reason?

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Katharine Hawley, "Types of Personal Identity" in *Cogito* Vol.11 no.2 (1997), pp.117-122.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (any edition), Book II Ch.XXVII "Of Identity and Diversity".

Bernard Williams, "The Self and the Future" in *Philosophical Review* Vol.79 no.2 (1970), pp.161-180.

Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity" in *Philosophical Review* Vol.80 no.1 (1971), pp.3-27.

Eric Olson, *The Human Animal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), "Introduction" and Chs.1-3.

Sydney Shoemaker, "Eric Olson, *The Human Animal*" in *Noûs* Vol.33 no.3 (1999), pp.496-504.

## Week 8: God and Evil

ESSAY QUESTION: Could a good and all-powerful God allow the existence of evil?

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Linda Zagzebski, *The Philosophy of Religion: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), Ch.7 "The Problem of Evil".

David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (any edition), Parts X and XI.

John Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" in *Mind* Vol.64 no.254 (1955), pp.200-212.

William L. Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism" in *American Philosophical Quarterly* Vol.16 no.4 (1979), pp.335-341.

Justin P. McBrayer, "Sceptical Theism" in *Philosophy Compass* Vol.5 no.7 (2010), pp.611-623.

Mark Piper, "Skeptical Theism and the Problem of Moral Aporia" in *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* Vol.62 no.2 (2007), pp.65-79.

Marilyn McCord Adams and Stewart Sutherland, "Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volumes* Vol.63 (1989), p.297-323.