Overview: Philosophy reflects on fundamental questions. Such questions often involve the nature of persons, underlying reality, the right and good, and the existence of God. This course will provide an introduction to these themes by discussing central topics in philosophy.

Goal: Our goal will be to understand and critically evaluate each theory that we cover.

Texts (at the campus bookstore):
*Simon Blackburn, Think.*

Assessment: There will be an in class final, a number of journal entries (3 pages) and 2 quizzes. They require both extensive knowledge of the readings and creative thought. In addition, it is required that the journal entries all go into a folder that will be collected at various points in the term and is due at the end of the semester (so that I can evaluate the progress of your work). This folder with all of these entries must be turned into me at the end of the term. There will also be a comprehensive final exam.

Journal entries and quizzes: 80% of your grade. (40% journal entries; 40% quizzes)
Final: 20% of your grade.

For your journals, you should read Jim Pryor’s “Philosophical Terms and Methods”, “How to Read a Philosophy Paper”, and “Guides on Writing a Philosophy Paper”: [www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/](http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/)

For the next class please read John Pollock, “Brain in a Vat” in Feinberg and bring some issues for discussion.

**TOPIC 1: ARE YOU IN A MATRIX? (THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE)**

John Pollack, “Brain in a Vat” in Feinberg
Rene Descartes, excerpts from *The Meditations*
Simon Blackburn, Ch. 1 of *Think*
Viewing of film: *The Matrix* or *Vanilla Sky*
Nick Bostrom at [http://www.simulation-argument.com/](http://www.simulation-argument.com/) (the paper called “The Simulation Argument: Why the Probability that You are Living in the Matrix is Quite High”)

**TOPIC 2: PERSONAL IDENTITY AND SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH**

Daniel C. Dennett, “Where am I?” in Feinberg.
John Locke, “The Prince and the Cobbler”, in Feinberg.
David Hume: “The Self”, in Feinberg.
Derek Parfit, “Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons”, in Feinberg.
Virtual lecture by Cristo Koch on split brains.
Viewing of film, *Moments*

**TOPIC 3: THE NATURE OF FREE WILL**

Chapter on free will from *Think*.
Ted Honderich, “A Defense of Hard Determinism” (Feinberg)
A.J. Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity” (Feinberg)
Roderick M. Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (Feinberg)

**TOPIC 4: ETHICS AND APPLIED ETHICS**

Documentary film on the Milgram experiments.
James Rachels, “The Debate Over Utilitarianism” (reserve)
Onera O’Neill, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics” (reserve)

**TOPIC 5: THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD**


*Comprehensive final exam (in class essay).*

Some useful reference works:

Some warnings:
- I’m afraid that philosophy reading can be tough. Allow yourself a fair amount of time to read the material (and to let the material sink in). It is okay to be puzzled.
- Academic honesty issues will be treated in accordance with the Moravian policy listed in the *Catalog and Student Handbook*. Students who copy an assignment from another person will fail the assignment and possibly the class. Material taken off the web *must* be cited and cannot be reproduced word for word (instead, it should be quoted). Students who take material off the web without citing and quoting will fail the assignment and possibly the class.
- Students are required to attend 2/3 of the classes to pass the class.