

## **COURSE SYLLABUS FORM**

**American University of Beirut  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Department: Philosophy**

**Course Number and Title: PHIL 201 (Introduction to Philosophy)**

### **1. Course Learning Outcomes**

This course introduces a set of central questions in philosophy and examines some of the possible answers that philosophers have provided to these questions. The course will cover such topics as the existence of God, reason and faith, the meaning of life, freewill, and morality. The aim of the course will be not to impart final and definitive answers to philosophical questions but rather to develop and sharpen students' powers of critical thinking and analysis.

### **2. Resources Available to Students**

The readings for this course are mainly contained in Joel Feinberg's, Reason & Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy (Eleventh Edition). Any additional set of readings will be made available in the philosophy department.

### **3. Grading Criteria**

Written requirements for this course consist of two papers and a final exam. In addition to these written requirements, you are urged to participate in class discussion.

A rough grade breakdown:

First paper 25%

Second paper 25%

Final exam 40%

Participation: 10%

### **4. Schedule**

#### **Tentative Reading Schedule**

**The Existence of God** . (Assigned readings: Samuel Clarke, pp. 23-4; William Rowe, pp. 24-33).

**The Problem of Evil** (Assigned readings: Fyodor Dostoevsky, pp. 89-95; J.L.Mackie pp. 100-107).

**Reason and Faith** (Assigned reading: Blaise Pascal, pp. 134-137; Simon Blackburn, pp. 137-143).

**The Meaning of Life.** (Assigned readings: Leo Tolstoy: My Confession, available in philosophy department).

**Personal Identity.** (Assigned readings: Daniel Dennett, pp. 420-428; John Perry, pp. 434-454).

**The Mind Body Problem.** (Assigned reading: Keith Campbell, pp. 342-355).

**Determinism, Free Will, and Responsibility.** (Assigned readings: Ted Honderich, pp.467-480 ; A. J. Ayer, pp. 481-486; C. Walter Stace, pp. 486-491; Harry Frankfurt, pp. 523-529).

**Moral Relativism.** (Assigned readings: Russ Schafer-Landau, pp. 604-616; James Rachels, pp. 616-623).

**Egoism.** (Assigned reading: Joel Feinberg, pp. 547-559; James Rachels, pp. 559-566).

## **5. Course Policy**

**Attendance:** Students are not penalized for not attending. However, most readings for this course are somewhat challenging. It will thus be hard to do well if you have not been present for class explanations and discussions. .

**Cheating:** Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or test will be given a zero. There will be no warnings and no second chances.

**Plagiarism:** Acts of plagiarism violate the Student Code of Conduct and are subject to disciplinary action. It is extremely important that you acknowledge your sources. Not doing so is called plagiarism. If you plagiarize, you will be given a zero for the assignment and your case will be turned over to the student affairs committee, which can

decide on a punishment of its choice, up to and including ejection from the university.

Here is how to avoid plagiarism:

a) If you copy more than 4 or 5 words (word for word) from another source, you must place these words in quotation marks and indicate their source. Failure to do so will count as plagiarism.

b) If you paraphrase more than a sentence from another source, you must indicate the source. Failure to do so will count as plagiarism.

If you are still not sure what counts as plagiarism, come talk to me. You will not be given a second chance, and I will not accept any excuses.