This is an introduction to some central questions, perplexities and concepts within the central areas of philosophy, introducing themes from metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Some extracts from classic texts will be engaged – for example, Plato, Descartes, John Stuart Mill and Jean-Paul Sartre – and contemporary approaches will be addressed. Questions include: What am I? Is free will an illusion? What is knowledge? Is belief in God rational? Whom ought I to save? In discussing these questions, important distinctions will be introduced. There will be attention to careful argument, including the nature of deductively sound argument, of necessity and contingency, of the a priori and a posteriori.

The classes will involve informal instruction, presentations and discussion, with a focus upon clarity and argument over a range of topics, though also, it is hoped, with a lightness of touch.

An appreciation of some central philosophical problems and how the problems may sensibly be approached – so the learning outcomes include awareness of (1) valid and invalid deductive arguments (2) key philosophical concepts (3) key philosophical problems in metaphysics, epistemology and ethics and (4) attempted solutions to those problems.
There are three required components: a midterm test (part of Session 6); an essay of not more than a 1,000 words (to be submitted by Session 11) on a topic chosen from three given; a one hour examination in Session 15, when one essay will need to be written, the paper will provide at least three questions and the topic areas will be provided beforehand though not the precise questions. The final grade will be determined by the midterm test (20%), the essay (40%), and the examination (40%). Each student will receive a grade no lower than that determined by these inputs and in this proportion; but in some cases a higher grade may be awarded to take into account such factors as improvement, contribution to class, and so on.

**Grade A:** Mastery of the problems, approaches and relevant literature, and an ability to fashion the material in one’s own way or to make some original contribution.

**Grade B:** Good grasp of the problems, approaches and relevant literature, but little or no attempt at own contribution or organization.

**Grade C:** A grasp of the problems, but an uncertain grasp of the approaches and relevant literature.

**Grade D:** Failure to grasp the problems properly, but some attempt made at understanding them.

**Grade F:** Not even trying.

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.

Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL’s staff.

**Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester.** See also **section 11.1 - Make up days.**

**Absence reporting for an absence due to illness**

1. On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) **0800 316 0469** (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.

2. Generally a doctor’s note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expediently at Gower Street.

3. At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at [http://bit.ly/NuCl5K](http://bit.ly/NuCl5K). You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.

4. Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna
Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.

Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

**Absence requests for non-illness reasons**

Absence requests for non-illness reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at academics@nyu.ac.uk.

**Further information regarding absences**

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.

**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.
Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Please note** end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

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**Plagiarism Policy**

**Plagiarism**: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

**All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to** [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) **and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.**

**Electronic Submission**

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

1) Go onto the Turnitin website [http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
2) Click ‘Create Account’ in the top right hand corner
3) Select user type of ‘student’
4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these).
5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

1) Log in to the Turnitin website
2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the ‘submit’ icon
4) Enter the title of your piece of work
5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
6) Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. **Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.** NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

**Required Texts**

*Peter Cave, Philosophy: A Beginner’s Guide*

*John Cottingham (ed.), Western Philosophy: an Anthology, 2nd edition*

*Peter Cave, Do Llamas Fall In Love: 33 Perplexing Philosophy Puzzles*

The readings suggested for each session below, to be read before the session, are indeed just suggestions for an overview. Focus for each subsequent class will be provided from Session 1. Students are not required to read all the readings suggested for each class.

**Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase as**

*Can a Robot be Human?* ISBN 978-1-85168-647-6 and
A good brief and basic introduction to philosophy is:


The Cottingham anthology above contains the relevant extracts for the course, but students who would like to read the whole of some important philosophical texts could try


The Instructor’s writings on philosophy of religion and ethics are found in his


and to paradoxes in his

*This Sentence Is False: an introduction to philosophical paradoxes*  ISBN: 978-1-84706-220-

This provides a good source for topics, though it can sometimes be quite advanced reading.

On writing a philosophy essay, see [www.jmpyror.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jmpyror.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html)

**Internet Research Guidelines**

*Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu)

This provides a good source for topics, though it can sometimes be quite advanced reading.

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**Additional Required Equipment**

None
Session 1  
4 September ‘13  
‘I think, therefore I am’: thought-experiments, distinctions and arguments

Suggested readings: Phil. 1; Anth. 1:4.  
(‘Phil’ denotes chapters in Cave’s *Philosophy*; ‘Anth’ denotes section/chapters in Cottingham’s *Anthology* and ‘Llama’ also to chapters.)

Session 2  
11 Sept. ‘13  
Are you just a brain? Dualisms and materialisms

Suggested readings: Phil. 6; Anth. IV: 4, 10, 12; Llama 30.

Session 3  
18 Sept. ‘13  
Can you ever act freely? Determinism and free will

Suggested readings: Phil. 2; Anth. V: 8, 9, 10, 11.

Session 4  
25 Sept ‘13  
Can you survive bodily death? Personal identity

Suggested readings: Phil. 3; Anth. V: 1, 2, 3, 5; Llama 11.

Session 5  
2 October ‘13  
Arguments concerning God: should we have sympathy for the Devil?

Suggested readings: Phil. 9; Anth. VI: 4, 6, 10; Llama 29.

Session 6  
9 October ‘13  
A short test on previous sessions – followed by: Life and death dilemmas

Suggested readings: Llama 3; Anth. IX: 9, 11.

Session 7  
16 October ‘13  
Ought we to maximize happiness? Approaches to ethics

Suggested readings: Phil. 4; Anth. VIII: 5, 6; Llama 1, 16.

Session 8  
23 October ‘13]  
Why obey the law? Is life nasty, brutish and short without government?

Suggested readings: Phil. 5; Anth. X: 1, 3, 4, 5; Llama 9.
Session 9
25 October '13
NOTE FRIDAY
What should we respect or tolerate? The Liberty Principle and free expression
Suggested readings: Llama 24; Phil. 5; Anth. X: 9.

Session 10
30 October '13
Is there more to knowledge than reaching the truth?
Suggested readings: Phil. 7; Anth. I: 12; Llama 2.

NOTE: No session on Wednesday, 6 November.

Session 11
13 Nov. '13
(1,000 word essay deadline)
What can we know? Problems of induction, deduction and science
Suggested readings: Llama 18; Phil. 8; Anth. VII: 5, 8.

Session 12
20 Nov. '13
Mortality and Immortality
Suggested readings: Llama 32; Phil. Epilogue; Anth. XII: 1, 6, 7.

Session 13
27 Nov. '13
What’s the point? — truth, beauty, ethics
Suggested readings: Phil. 10 and Epilogue; Anth. XII: 9, 10; Llama 33.

Session 14
4 December ‘13
Review of topics for Session 15’s examination.

Session 15
11 Dec. ‘13
One hour examination.

Classroom Etiquette
Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.

Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.
Mobile phones should be set on silent. Texting, tweeting, emailing, googling and similar are not permitted.

Laptops and recordings are only to be used with the express permission of the Instructor.

Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Co-curricular Activities</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Co-curricular Activities</td>
<td>London has a large variety of philosophical lectures, discussions and seminars. Information will be provided as available.</td>
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**Your Instructor**

Peter Cave read philosophy at University College London and King’s College Cambridge. His philosophy lectureships over the years include University College London, University of Khartoum, Sudan, and City University London. He has been attached for many years to The Open University, UK. He has given guest lectures at universities in Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands as well as Romania and Italy.

Peter is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, sits on the Council of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and chairs the Humanist Philosophers of Great Britain. He has scripted and presented BBC radio philosophy programmes – some too clever by one eighth – and often takes part in public debates.

He has published academic papers on paradoxes in the usual philosophy journals and has written many lighter pieces for philosophy magazines. His philosophy books include *Can a Robot Be Human? What’s Wrong with Eating People?* and *Do Llamas Fall in Love?* – as well as *This Sentence Is False: an introduction to philosophical paradoxes*. His most recent article is ‘Burqas and Bikinis: Morality and Muddles’ in a small collection edited by Alan Haworth, *Right to Object*?

Peter lives in Soho, London, enjoys opera (well, he thinks he knows what he likes), even delights in religious music, despite his atheism, and is often found with a glass of wine – or two…