

**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 200A - Introduction to Philosophy I**  
**Fall 2011**

**MW 2.35 PM - 3:25 p.m., plus one one-hour conference**

**Room: ADAMS AUD**

**Professor Storrs McCall**

**Leacock Bldg, Rm 915**

**Tel #: 398-6061**

The course will deal with some of the central problems of philosophy: the mind-body problem, freedom, scepticism and certainty, fate, time and the existence of God.

Since earliest times, philosophers have been concerned with certain basic problems. These include the following: Is there such a thing as the mind or the soul, which taken together with the body constitutes a person? If so, how does it relate to the body? Does there exist an objective world of physical objects which we learn about through our senses, or are sensory impressions unreliable in that they guarantee the existence of nothing but themselves? Does it make sense to suppose that humans have freedom of choice, or are all these actions determined by physical laws in the way the movements of the sun and moon are? Are people's destinies guided by an obscure but inexorable Fate, which shapes their futures whatever they may do? Does the existence of an omniscient God, who knows exactly what the future will bring, imply that free choice is an illusion? In all these matters, have we any hope of attaining certainty and knowledge, or are scepticism and doubt the healthiest attitudes to adopt? These are the kinds of questions which will be posed and, if possible, answered. Readings include classical philosophical texts, but the approach is problem-oriented rather than historical

**Readings:** Plato, *Meno*  
Plato, *Phaedo*  
Descartes, *Meditations*  
Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*  
Taylor, *Metaphysics*

**Method of evaluation:** Essays 60%  
Final Exam 40%

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**In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the contents and/evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.**