The course is an introduction to some of the main problems in philosophy—God, the mind, freedom, knowledge and ethics. We begin with some reflections about the legacy of Socrates and then go on to the existence of God, which is perhaps the most basic philosophical question of all because our answer to it influences how we will answer all the others. This leads naturally to a discussion of death and the soul, and then to more modern ideas about the nature of persons. The later topics are about whether it is possible for us to have objective knowledge in either science or ethics.

It is a weakness of contemporary culture that such issues are often taken to be matters of opinion only. After all, it is said, no one can prove whether God exists or whether life has a meaning. But it is better to take these problems as matters for rational investigation. Even if the issues are so complex that we cannot expect agreement, we should nevertheless ask what is most reasonable to believe, rather than merely grabbing at whatever ideas seem attractive. Like every responsible human inquiry, philosophy is first and last an exercise in reason. The ideas that should come out on top are those that have the best reasons on their sides.

The semester does not start until June 16, but the Blackboard web site for the course, while not presently available, will be available well before semester start. Registered students will be notified via email when the web site does become available, so keep a lookout for the notification. Meanwhile, some advice is in order. Since the class compresses sixteen weeks into eight weeks reading and assignments will come more quickly than usual. Thus it will be prudent to access the web site (Go to “canyons.edu” and click on the Blackboard tab at the top of the page, then click on the Bb button. Follow the directions to log in, then click on the underlined title of the course, which takes you to the Blackboard Announcements page) as soon as it becomes available, read “Orientation” and then follow the directions in “Getting Started.” Namely, thoroughly explore the site and peruse everything: **Information** (all files) and **Documents** (all files). Also, get the text as soon as possible (for those who cannot wait for web site availability it is *Problems from Philosophy*, 3rd ed., Rachels and Rachels, McGraw Hill) and be reading the first chapter when the semester begins. Get a jump on the class and stay ahead throughout the semester. For now, contact me at Russell.Sanders@canyons.edu, but once the web site becomes available contact the instructor with any questions or concerns via Blackboard Messages.