

I am Caspar Hare, Professor of Philosophy at MIT, currently teaching 24.00x Introduction to Philosophy: God, Knowledge, and Consciousness on the edX platform. Ask Me Anything!

2400xIntroPhilosophy ¹ and r/Science AMAs¹

¹Affiliation not available

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Abstract

Hi! I'm Caspar Hare. I'm a Professor of Philosophy at MIT. I work on ethics, rationality and I am currently running an edX course: Introduction to Philosophy: God, Knowledge and Consciousness, which has recently introduced "instructor-grading" (you can read more about it [here](#) and [here](#).) Ask Me Anything! Proof: <https://twitter.com/2400xPhilosophy/status/770667051941789696>
EDIT: Thanks for a marvelous discussion! I have to go. Keep on philosophizing! ~Caspar

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Thanks for doing this prof. Hare. Do you share the view of some philosophers and/or neuroscientists that what is commonly understood as "free will" is a scientifically testable concept? If yes how does this might affect how we treat moral responsibility in societies if determinism were to be proved true ?

PS. I took your course when it was first available on EDX and I enjoyed it immensely. Thank you!
Manos

[makmanos](#)

Hi [u/makmanos](#)! (This is Caspar's TA for 24.00x)

I remember you! You made some really excellent posts in the discussion forum. I'm glad you enjoyed the course. Hope you're well!

Hi professor, thank you so much for doing this.

Just two questions:

1. Do you have any reading suggestions on Contractualism for a beginner in philosophy? I really don't have much experience reading philosophy but contractualism always sounded really good to me and I want to explore more of it.
2. Sort of piggybacking off the first question, but any suggested readings to get into philosophy in the first place? Thanks a lot

[redsquare92](#)

credited.



Hi [u/redsquare92](#),

(Caspar's TA for the MOOC here). One place to start, is the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on contractualism](#). There's a great bibliography at the end. (Also maybe check out Oxford Bibliographies Online?) Or just jump right into Scanlon's *What We Owe To Each Other*.

Professor Hare,

My name is Mike, I'll be taking your seminar "Topics of Philosophy" this upcoming semester. I hope to attend graduate school for philosophy, likely for ethics or political philosophy.

My question is about the so-called "ivory tower" effect of academia. Do you think philosophers have a duty to contribute to public discourse relevant to their field of expertise? For example, should ethicists weigh in on controversial topics like whether or not to go to war, or abortion (like Judith Thomson has done)?

I'm worried that graduate school incentivizes publishing over all else, leaving little time to be a public intellectual.

Thank you and see you soon!

[NihilistTendencies](#)

Hi Mike,

Come up to the 9th floor and hang out with us sometime!

What's your take on the Multiverse Theory from a philosophic point of view?

[TheLobotomist](#)

(Caspar's TA here!)

We'll be talking about the Multiverse Theory --- and how it bears on the Fine Tuning Argument for the Existence of God --- next week over at [24.00x Introduction to Philosophy: God, Knowledge, and Consciousness](#) if you're interested!

There are an abundance of intro level philosophy classes available on iTunes and various MOOC sites. I'm curious if you would consider putting together a more advanced class in philosophy. Something appropriate for upper level undergraduates. A class on epistemology or philosophy of biology, e.g., would be perfect.

[ehead](#)

Hi [u/ehead](#),

(Caspar's TA for the MOOC here!) I think that would be really cool. MIT (and edX) offers two other philosophy MOOCs that, while not on epistemology or philosophy of bio, aren't intro classes:

- [24.118x Paradox & Infinity](#), which covers issues in the philosophy of math, time travel, computation, logic, etc. Check out [the promo video here](#) if you're interested!
- [24.09x Minds & Machines](#), which is a course on the philosophy of mind --- AI, consciousness, perception, etc. Check out [its promo video here](#).

(The promo videos for the courses are pretty cool. They were made by Damien Rochford, who was one of the co-founders of [Wi-Phi](#)).

Taking my first philosophy class this semester, any suggestions before I start up?

[Dawcks](#)

Hi [u/Dawcks](#),

(Caspar's TA here!) That's awesome. Have fun! What's the class on?

Hello Caspar,

If God is omnipotent and all knowing, why would He make another being such as the devil who could rise up to equal His power to capture the most precious gift of a human soul when it is known to be God's greatest creation?

Wouldn't He have seen Lucifer's betrayal? Why wouldn't the other archangels just rise up to destroy Lucifer?

[Im_goin_commando](#)

Hi [Im_goin_commando](#),

I'm Caspar's TA for his MOOC.

It sounds to me like you're asking about the Problem of Evil, which is an argument against the existence of an omnipotent, omniscience, and omnibenevolent God that we'll be talking about next week over at Caspar's MOOC [24.00x Introduction to Philosophy: God, Knowledge, and Consciousness](#). Come check it out if you're interested!

What jobs can a student get with a philosophy degree? How useful is it?

[randomwhiteboycharli](#)

The Daily Nous has collected some information about this [here](#).