

Breathe

Philosophy is hard. Don't be discouraged if you don't get the material at first. Appreciating and understanding philosophy—learning how *to do* philosophy—requires a lot of thinking and reading (more realistically: re-re-re-re-thinking and re-re-re-re-reading). Like anything, it requires practice. Thankfully, a lot of philosophical ideas aren't totally unfamiliar: they're ones you've probably thought about at some point in your life and maybe even ones you're wrestling with right now.

Sometimes though, the ideas you'll encounter will be unfamiliar and really abstract; thinking through them can be uncomfortable, overwhelming, and even exhausting. This is normal. I'm here to reassure you that engaging with these ideas can be fun and interesting, and even liberating.

Just remember that you're not alone. Your TAs and your professor are here to help. It's going to be tough, and you're going to get frustrated. You may even get bored. Or wonder why any of this is relevant or worth thinking about. That's OK. It's all part of the process. If you try, I promise that you *will* gain something important by the end. Philosophy has something to offer everyone.