

PHIL 110: Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus, Fall 2019

1. Instructor Information

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Office: BRNG 7133

Office Hours: MW 11:30am-12:30pm, and by appointment

Pronouns: he/him/his

2. Course Time and Location

Time: 10:30-11:20am, MWF

Location: BRNG 1230

3. Course Description and Objectives

This aim of this course is to introduce students to the study of philosophy. While the primary focus will be on the philosophical tradition of the western world, the course will place this tradition in dialogue with other philosophical traditions (including, but not limited to, those of China and India). Topics to be discussed include: our ethical and political obligations, what constitutes a good life, how to face death, how our knowledge is justified, personal identity and the self, perception and the external world, religion and the existence of God or gods, and more. Central to philosophy is the idea that our beliefs can and should be justified – that is, that we should be able to give reasons why we hold certain beliefs rather than others. Students who take the course will learn how to recognize and evaluate such reasons in discussion and in written texts, and they will practice developing and articulating reasons of their own.

4. Required Texts

- Plato, *Defence of Socrates, Euthyphro, and Crito* (tr. Gallop) (Oxford World's Classics)
- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy, with Selections from the Objections and Replies* (tr. Moriarty) (Oxford World's Classics)
- Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Hackett)

I have tried to select cheap and readily available texts, so as to avoid placing a financial burden on students. If acquiring these texts poses a hardship for you, please come talk to me. Required readings outside of these texts will be made available online. A reading schedule is provided at the end of this syllabus.

5. Course requirements and grading

Reading responses (30 points). 11 times during the semester (usually, but not always, on Fridays), you will be asked to turn in a short piece of writing (~1 page) in which you reflect on the readings for that week. More detailed instructions will be given on the individual assignments. The point of these is to encourage you to practice philosophical writing and to develop particular philosophical skills (such as identifying, summarizing, and evaluating arguments) that will be important for writing your final paper. Each will be worth three points, and one can be missed without penalty.

Exams (45 points). The course is split into three units. There will be a non-cumulative exam for each unit. These exams will primarily concern your knowledge of course content: your ability to summarize the positions and arguments we have studied and to define core concepts. Before each exam, there will be a review session; this will be guided by you, so please come prepared with questions.

Final paper (25 points). Instead of a final exam, you will write a short paper (5-6 page, double spaced, 12pt font, 1-inch margins). A list of topics will be provided; you may also write on a topic of your own choosing, but you must secure my approval first. Concrete guidelines and a grading rubric will be provided later in the term. A portion of your grade will be for an outline, due December 4, on which you will receive feedback before the final paper is due.

Participation and attendance (0 points). I will not be grading attendance or participation in this course, and I would like to explain why. **Attendance.** In order to succeed in this course, you will need to attend most of the class sessions. The texts we will read are difficult and easy to misinterpret without guidance, and online resources for self-teaching are of highly variable quality. At the same time, I recognize that you have lives beyond this course that may force you to miss class on occasion. If you must miss class, I encourage you to get notes from a fellow student, review them, and then come to office hours with questions. **Participation.** Participation grades are easily subject to bias and favor students who are comfortable speaking in class over others; for this reason, I prefer not to give them. I nonetheless expect you to come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them.

Note: Both of these policies are experiments, and I reserve the right to change them mid-semester if necessary.

Grading Scale.	A+: 98-100	A: 93-97	A-: 90-92
	B+: 88-89	B: 83-87	B-: 80-82
	C+: 78-79	C: 73-77	C-: 70-72
	D: 60-69	F: <60	

6. Course policies

Disability and accommodation policy. It is my intention that this course be made accessible to all students, and not pose an undue burden. This means, minimally, that I will grant any accommodations required by the Disability Resource Center. But I am also aware that, for any number of reasons, you may require accommodations that are not formally certified by that office. If some aspect of the class poses a hardship for you, I encourage you to talk to me, and we can work together to develop an alternative way for you fulfill the course requirements.

Purdue Honors Pledge. As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together -we are Purdue.

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.

Plagiarism. [Purdue University policy](#) defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.” In this course, you will be asked to complete assignments in which you articulate your own thoughts in your own words. As part of these assignments, you will be asked to engage with (including summarizing) the ideas of those we have read, as well as work you find on your own. It is imperative, in completing these assignments, that you cite any sources you use. Failure to do so is a serious offense, and will result, at minimum, in receiving a zero score on the relevant assignment, as well as being reported to the university. Serious cases will result in failing the entire course. Here are some ground rules for what I expect:

- If you use *the exact words* of another author, you must put the quoted passage inside quotation marks, name the author and give the page number of the quote in the main text, and include a bibliography containing the full reference.
- If you *summarize or paraphrase* the point of another author, you must name the author and give the page number of the summarized passage in the main text, and include a bibliography containing the full reference.
- If you *cite a fact or statistic* that you found in a source, you must cite that source in the main text and in the bibliography. The *only exception* is if the fact is common knowledge. Here is an example of common knowledge: “dogs have four legs.” Anything more obscure than that requires a citation. *If you are uncertain, always err on the side of including a citation.*

Commercial websites. Material distributed in this class (assignments, exams, etc.) may ***NOT*** be sold to commercial websites (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero, and Quizlet). This prohibition includes course notes, which are considered “derivative works” of the instructor’s materials. You are permitted to distribute notes to other individuals (e.g., a friend who missed class) in a private capacity.

In-class etiquette. Philosophy is a social endeavor. People engaged in philosophy do not simply think in solitude, but rather engage in discussion with others. That will be true in this class as well: you will be encouraged to discuss the topics we cover with your fellow students. You are even encouraged to disagree with them. It is therefore imperative that you understand how to do so respectfully. Here are some ground rules:

- Think of those with whom you disagree not as opponents but as fellow seekers of the truth. Even if you disagree, you are *collaborating*.
- Acknowledge the person you are responding to, by name if possible.
- Address your comments to the arguments that have been offered. Never attack the intelligence or character of the person who argued for them.
- On some issues, you may have strongly held opinions. That is ok, but it is important to recognize that people who disagree with you are doing so in *good faith*. Before getting angry with or dismissive of another person, try to understand why they think the way they do.

7. Reading schedule

See next page.

Reading Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading (Required)	Assignments (due on date listed)
Aug 19	Introduction	<i>no required reading</i>	<i>no assignments</i>
Aug 21	What is philosophy? (1)	"The Man Who Was Weary of His Life"	n/a
Aug 23	What is philosophy? (2)	Plato, <i>Defence of Socrates</i>	n/a
UNIT 1: ETHICAL THEORIES			
Aug 26	Introduction to ethics	Zhuangzi, <i>Robber Zhi</i>	Reading response
Aug 28	The Good and the Divine	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>	n/a
Aug 30	Utilitarian consequentialism	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i>	n/a
Sep 2	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY		
Sep 4	Limitations of utilitarianism	Nozick, "The Experience Machine"	Reading response
Sep 6	Mozi's consequentialism	Mozi, "Universal Love"	n/a
Sep 9	Kantian ethics	Korsgaard, <i>Creating the Kingdom of Ends</i>	Reading response
Sep 11	Virtue ethics: Aristotle	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	n/a

Date	Topic	Reading (Required)	Assignments (due on date listed)
Sep 13	Virtue ethics: Confucianism	Ivanhoe, <i>Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation</i>	n/a
Sep 16	Buddhist ethics	Santideva, <i>Bodhicaryavatara</i>	Reading response
Sep 18	Review session		
Sep 20	NO CLASS - PROFESSOR AWAY		
Sep 23	EXAM 1: Ethical Theories		
UNIT 2: EPISTEMOLOGY & METAPHYSICS			
Sep 25	Introduction to epistemology	<i>no required reading</i>	n/a
Sep 27	Descartes (1)	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Preface, Synopsis, and First Meditation	n/a
Sep 30	Descartes (2)	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Second Meditation	Reading response
Oct 2	Descartes (3)	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Third Meditation	n/a
Oct 4	Descartes (4)	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Fourth and Fifth Meditations	n/a
Oct 7	NO CLASS - FALL BREAK		

Date	Topic	Reading (Required)	Assignments (due on date listed)
Oct 9	Descartes (5)	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Sixth Meditation	Reading response
Oct 11	Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia	Atherton, <i>Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period</i> (excerpt)	n/a
Oct 14	Zera Yacob	Zera Yacob, <i>Hatata</i>	Reading response
Oct 16	Subjective Idealism	Berkeley, <i>First Dialogue Between Hylas and Philonous</i>	n/a
Oct 18	Is there a self? (1) Hume	Hume, "Of Personal Identity"	n/a
Oct 21	Is there a self? (2) Buddhism	Siderits, <i>Buddhism as Philosophy</i>	Reading response
Oct 23	Review session		
Oct 25	EXAM 2: Epistemology and Metaphysics		
UNIT 3: RELIGION, GOVERNMENT, LIFE, AND DEATH			
Oct 28	The ontological argument	Anselm, <i>Proslogion</i> & Gaunilo's Reply	n/a
Oct 30	The argument from design (1)	Hume, <i>Dialogues</i> (parts II-VII)	n/a
Nov 1	The argument from design (2)	Nyāya Sutra	n/a

Date	Topic	Reading (Required)	Assignments (due on date listed)
Nov 4	The cosmological argument	Hume, <i>Dialogues</i> (part IX)	Reading response
Nov 6	The problem of evil	Hume, <i>Dialogues</i> (parts X-XI)	n/a
Nov 8	Free will (1)	Timpe, <i>Free Will</i>	n/a
Nov 11	Free will (2)	Roskies, "Neuroscientific challenges to free will..."	Reading response
Nov 13	Is death a harm? (1)	Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of Things</i>	n/a
Nov 15	Is death a harm? (2)	Nagel, "Death"	n/a
Nov 18	Civil Disobedience (1)	Plato, <i>Crito</i>	Reading response
Nov 20	Civil Disobedience (2)	King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"	n/a
Nov 22	Review session		
Nov 25	EXAM 3: Religion, Government, Life, and Death		
Nov 27	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Nov 29			

Date	Topic	Reading (Required)	Assignments (due on date listed)
Dec 2	Existentialism	Camus, "The Almond Tree"; "Prometheus in the Underworld"; "The Myth of Sisyphus"	n/a
Dec 4	Existentialism & Race	Fanon, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man"	Paper outline due
Dec 6	Existentialism & Gender	de Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i> (ex- cerpt)	n/a
TBD	FINAL PAPERS DUE - NO FINAL EXAM		