

Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus, Spring 2017

Instructor: Keith Buhler

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Asbury Office Hours: Thursday, 12-1, Library

Books:

- Jostein Gaardner, *Sophie's World*
- Plato, *Last Days of Socrates*
- Peter Kreeft, *Philosophy 101*
- Peter Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*
- Augustine, *Confessions*

Buy the exact editions in the links only, please, because I assign page numbers *from these editions*. Get physical books, not e-books, unless the cost is prohibitive. New or used are both OK. You may purchase from any online retailer or physical bookstore, but the links provided are from Amazon (I participate in their affiliate program). Other handouts are provided for free online.

Course Description:

This course is an exercise in a different way of thinking: philosophical thinking. Strictly speaking, this is not an “introduction” to philosophical thinking – because everybody already thinks this way *sometimes*. Rather, we will *exercise* it more. We will practice thinking philosophically. The method is to read and discuss philosophical writings and movies. In order to think philosophically, we will practice read, discuss, and write about these texts.

Our topics will be eclectic: origins, myth, Socrates, happiness, evil, the soul, God, and human nature. Some of these questions are more abstract, some are more practical – all of them are windows into a reality beyond the day-to-day.

There are no long lectures; every class period will consist of *dialog* together. Philosophical thinking cannot be programed into you; you must take responsibility for dialogging in class and out of class.

There *are* answers. Philosophy is not just about questions. But there are no *easy* answers. You will be confused, at points. And the answers we will find will only come after hard work. So enjoy the ride. Ask questions. Get frustrated. Doodle. Guess. Take risks.

The ultimate motivation for having the conversation we call philosophy must be that it can make us better. We enter into the Great Conversation with our own, often confused, thoughts. We may learn to love God with our minds. We may become more connected, integrated, thoughtful, reflective human beings. We may become part of the Conversation, and by it be forever changed.

Learning Goals:

- To practice thinking philosophically.
- To understand difficult and complex arguments.
- To become familiar with the thought of Greek and Medieval philosophers such as Plato and Augustine.
- To understand, test, and defend the Christian worldview.
- To reflect on our own lives, thoughts, and actions.
- To become more virtuous, thoughtful, and wise human beings in the pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty.

Scope and Sequence:

The course is broken into 6 Units of 2-3 weeks each: Origins, Socrates, Forms, Logic, God, and Human Nature. Each unit consists of four components. (1) Reading and daily quizzes, (2) Discussion in class, (3) Writing. Therefore, the best way to earn an 'A' is to read carefully, participate, and write.

Grades:

You will be graded primarily on reading, participation, and papers, plus applicable extra credit.

| Assessment category | % |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Readings (weekly quizzes) | 25% |
| Participation | 25% |
| Disputation Papers | 50% |
| Extra Credit | 0-5% max |

I. Outline

The course outline tells you the reading and topic for each day. The outline is *subject to minor changes* for weather, sicknesses, travel, etc. The online version is always up to date.

Unit 1**Week 1 Origins (Faith and Reason, Myth, Holiness)**

Jan-10 T Syllabus Day (Jan 10 AU, Jan 23 FPA)

Jan-12 R JP Moreland, "Love your God with all your mind"

Week 2 Myth

Jan-17 T *Sophie's World*, "Garden of Eden, Top Hat, The Myths"

Jan-19 R Genesis (Chps. 1-2); *Sophie's World*, "Natural Philosophers, Democritus, and Fate"

Week 3 Holiness

Jan-24 T *Sophie's World*, "Socrates, Athens, Plato"; Plato, Euthyphro

Jan-26 R Euthyphro Discussion; Kreeft, *Philosophy 101*, (Chapter II, pp. 87-114) "Philosophy Exemplified"

Unit 2**Week 4 Socrates (Philosophy, Dialectic, Death)**

(Unit Paper 1 due Tuesday at midnight)

Jan-31 T Plato, *Apology* - Is Socrates guilty? What is he being accused of?

Feb-2 R *Apology* Discussion

Week 5 Dialectic

Feb-7 T Kreeft, *Philosophy 101* (13-49) - Why is philosophy misunderstood?

Feb-9 R Kreeft, *Philosophy 101* (50-86) - Why is philosophy happy and death-defying?

Week 6 Death

Feb-14 T Plato, *Phaedo* (116-143) - Was Socrates true to his principles, even in death?

Feb-16 R Plato, *Phaedo* II (116-143) The soul is immortal because opposites come from opposites, and because we remember Equality itself.

Week 7 The Soul

Unit Paper 2, Due Tuesday at Midnight

Feb-21 T Plato, *Phaedo* (143-199) The soul is immortal if it is philosophical because it is more like the Forms than it is like material things.

Feb-23 R *Phaedo* Discussion, Kreeft *Philosophy 101* (131-148)

Week 8 Forms

Feb-28 T Peter Kreeft, “Forms” handout Mar-2 R Forms Discussion (Optional: Read *Sophie’s World* “Major’s Cabin”, “Aristotle,” “Hellenism”, “Postcards”)

Unit 4**Week 9 Logic**

Unit Paper 3, Due Tuesday by Midnight

Mar-7 T Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, Introduction, sections 1, 4, and 5; and Chapter I, “Understanding” (Midterms Due) Mar-9 R Kreeft, *Socratic Logic* III, “Material Fallacies”

Break

Mar 13-20 Easter Break

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Week 10 Reasoning

Mar-21 T Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, V, “Judgment”, Section 1 and 2 “Judgments, Propositions, and Sentences” and “What is truth?”

Mar-23 R Kreeft, *Socratic Logic* VIII, “Reasoning”; Willard, “Jesus the Logician”

Unit 5**Week 11 Augustine**

Unit Paper 4, Due Tuesday by Midnight

Mar-28 T *Confessions* 1 - Augustine and longing for God’s presence. *Sophie’s World* “Two Cultures”

Mar-30 R *Confessions*, 2-3 - Why did Augustine steal the pears? How bad was this sin?

Week 12 Evil

Apr-4 T *Confessions*, 7 - Does evil exist?

Apr-6 R *Confessions* Discussion

Week 13 God

Apr-11 T Aquinas, “Five Ways of Proving God’s Existence” - Can it be proven that God exists? The First Way; *Sophie’s World* “The Middle Ages”

Apr-13 R Aquinas “Five Ways” - The Second, Fourth, and Fifth Ways.

Unit 6

Week 14 2001: A Space Odyssey

Unit Paper 5, Due Tuesday by Midnight

Apr-18 T Read Dargis, “In Defense of Slow Movies”, Watch 2001: A Space Odyssey film - Hal as Friend, Enemy, and Stepping Stone

Apr-20 R Dave as the New Adam

Week 15 Wall-E

Apr-25 T Wall-E as E.T., Hal 9000, and Adam

Apr-27 R Wall-E and Coming Down to Earth

Week 16 Tree of Life

May-2 T Tree of Life as Evolution and Genesis

May-4 R Tree of Life Discussion