

Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus

Instructor: Keith Buhler

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Teacher Talk: Monday, 2-3pm (tentative)

Books:

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

Buy the proper ISBNs 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 dialoging 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, Sequence, and Grades:

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.

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 (FPA):

The outline tells you the reading due each day, the topic. The outline is *subject to minor changes*.

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

Jan-24 T Syllabus Day

Jan-26 R JP Moreland, "Love your God with all your mind"

Week 2 – Myth

Jan-31 T *Sophie's World*, “Garden of Eden, Top Hat, The Myths”

Feb-2 R Genesis (Chps. 1-3); *Sophie's World*, “Natural Philosophers, Democritus, and Fate”

Week 3 – Holiness

Feb-7 T *Sophie's World*, “Socrates, Athens, Plato”; Plato, Euthyphro

Feb-9 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)

Feb-14 T Plato, Apology - Is Socrates guilty? What is he being accused of?

Feb-16 R Apology Discussion

Week 5 – Dialectic

Feb-21 T Kreeft, *Philosophy 101* (13-49) - Why is philosophy misunderstood?

Feb-23 R Kreeft, *Philosophy 101* (50-86) - Why is philosophy happy and death-defying?

Week 6 – Death

Feb-28 T Plato, *Phaedo* (116-143) - Was Socrates true to his principles, even in death?

Mar-2 R Plato, *Phaedo* II (116-143) The soul is immortal because opposites come from opposites, and because we remember Equality itself.

Unit 3, Week 7 – The Soul

Unit Paper 2, Due Tuesday at Midnight

Mar-7 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.

Mar-9 R *Phaedo* Discussion, Kreeft *Philosophy 101* (131-148)

Week 8 – Forms

Mar-14 T Kreeft, “Forms” handout

Mar-16 R Forms Discussion (Optional: Read *Sophie's World* “Major’s Cabin”, “Aristotle,” “Hellenism”, “Post-cards”)

Unit 4, Week 9 – Logic

Unit Paper 3, Due Tuesday by Midnight

Mar-21 T Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, Introduction, sections 1, 4, and 5; and Chapter I, “Understanding”

Mar-23 R Kreeft, *Socratic Logic* III, “Material Fallacies”

Week 10 – Reasoning

Mar-28 T Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, V, “Judgment”, Section 1 and 2 “Judgments, Propositions, and Sentences” and “What is truth?”

Mar-30 R Kreeft, *Socratic Logic* VIII, “Reasoning”; Willard, “Jesus the Logician”

Unit 5, Week 11 – Augustine

Unit Paper 4, Due Tuesday by Midnight

Apr-4 T *Confessions* 1 - Augustine and longing for God’s presence. *Sophie’s World* “Two Cultures”

Apr-6 R *Confessions*, 2-3 - Why did Augustine steal the pears? How bad was this sin?

Week 12 – Evil

Apr-11 T *Confessions*, 7 - Does evil exist?

Apr-13 R *Confessions* Discussion

Apr 17-21 Easter Break

Week 13 – God

Apr-25 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-27 R Aquinas “Five Ways” - The Second, Fourth, and Fifth Ways.

Unit 6, Week 14

Unit Paper 5, Due Tuesday by Midnight

May-2 T May-4 R

Week 15

May-9 T May-11 R

Unit 6, Week 16 – 2001: A Space Odyssey

May-16 T Read Dargis, “In Defense of Slow Movies”; Watch 2001: A Space Odyssey film - Hal as Friend, Enemy, and Stepping Stone

May-18 R Dave as the New Adam

Week 17 – Wall-E

Term Paper Due Tuesday by Midnight

May-23 T Watch Wall-E – Wall-E as E.T., Hal 9000, and Adam

May-25 R Discuss Wall-E – Wall-E and Coming Down to Earth

Week 18 – Tree of Life

May-30 T Tree of Life as Evolution and Genesis

Jun-1 R Tree of Life Discussion

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