



Tutorial Letter 201/2/2018

Introduction to Western Philosophy PLS 1501

Semester 2

Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your first assignment

BARCODE

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1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Student this tutorial letter contains information for your first assignment. As this was your first assignment the reading required for it was at a reasonable minimum and the questions general enough in scope that they could have been approached in various ways even with limited study of the entire study material. It is so however that those of you who may have studied the material more thoroughly would have a richer content with which to provide answers. In the following section we have included an actual example drawn from a student who submitted her assignment early. We have attached the standard rubric used to mark each question underneath the question in order to show you our considerations systematically. In your actual assignment only the mark appears but the attached rubric is attached to give you a detailed breakdown of how we arrive at the final number. Of a total of 20 marks for each question 5 (comprising 25%) marks were awarded for the structure, grammar and coherence of your answers. The largest portion of marks 12 (comprising 60%) was for the factual content and quality of the answer. The final 3 marks (comprising a total 15%) was awarded for references to the sources.

2 GENERAL COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENT 1

2.1 What in your understanding is Western Philosophy? (You may refer to philosophers, problems and branches in your answer) [20 marks]

Western philosophy is the study of the philosophical thought of the western world. The word philosophy means "love of wisdom" and Western philosophy is but one among many philosophies. Western philosophers are divided into different schools, depending on their specific field of study. These fields are metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. Logic may be included in all of the branches of philosophy. The field of philosophy is not easily defined and for that reason all philosophies including eastern, Indian and African should be studied as all fields borrow thoughts and ideas from each other. A holistic approach should always be used when studying philosophy. The main difference between Eastern and Western philosophy lies in the fact that faith and belief form an integral part of eastern philosophy whereas in western philosophy this is not the case. The ancient Greek thinkers posed metaphysical questions which the eastern thinkers had already dealt with through religious thought and they then moved on to moral and political reasoning. The fathers of Western philosophy were the ancient Greeks; Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who formed the basis of modern philosophical thought processes as we know it today. Western philosophy has progressed through various ages in man's development, from the ancient Greeks, Medieval times, the Renaissance, the age of Revolution, into the modern world and contemporary philosophy. Throughout the ages man has constantly debated and questioned philosophical thought and will continue to do so.

Mark Awarded : 15/20

Study pages 7-15 for a general discussion on the nature of Western philosophy

Aspect /Criterion	Value %
<p>Structure of Essay(Coherence, language, spelling grammar, cogency)</p> <p>Although this is philosophy and not an English course, the use of language is vitally important in the construction of philosophical argumentation. Grammar is a representation of the structure of thought and as such must be taken seriously</p>	<p>Total <u>5</u> Student's score <u>5</u></p> <p>*although this isn't an essay, the student's sentences are structured in a grammatically correct fashion. She has made good use of punctuation, and the thoughts or ideas flow logically and systematically from one sentence to the other</p>
<p>Substantive content of answer and sources (eg dictionaries, encyclopaedias of philosophy, textbooks, study guide)</p>	<p>Total <u>12</u> Student's Score <u>10</u></p> <p>*she has made mention of the regionality or westernness of Western philosophy, recognising the field as one philosophy amongst others. She specifically mentions Eastern philosophy and counterposes the two. She also discussed the different branches of Western philosophy as well as its different historical periods.</p>
<p>Bibliography / references</p>	<p>Total <u>3</u> Student's Score <u>0</u></p> <p>The student here scores 0 since she has mentioned none of the sources she drew the content material from, either inside the text as she borrowed and synthesised the ideas or at the end of the section or assignment as a complete list.</p>

TABLE 1.1 (related to question 2.1)

2.2 From your understanding what is Ethics and what does it deal with? (You may refer to examples and content in your study material and other sources) [20 marks]

Ethics are set of moral principles dealing with what is right and wrong. They help in establishment of our moral conduct as are gathered by norms and values of the community or organisation. They assist in problem solving, in dilemma where it is not easy to take a decision. They make life easier and a world a better and safe place to stay as people are expected to act reasonable and responsible, example no one is allowed to kill a person, with or without reason being because such act is illegal. Though it differs in other cultural societies such as a documentary I once watched, incident took place in Pakistan where a young girl got shot by his uncle and dad because she got married to a guy the family does not approve, fortunately she survive the bullet. It is clear that every community is gathered by their norms and values and they are not the same with that of the other society or community. Therefore is good that every society to have its own ethics.

The western ethical theory consists of various traditions, the Greek, Judeo-Christian, modern tradition and non-consequentialist/deontological ethics with different theories based on their beliefs and on what is right or wrong. According to the Greek tradition, the highest good is to have the appropriate politician institution such as law system, economic system and many others to strengthen their ethics," From Greek perspective, ethics and politics are inseparable" Department of philosophy, practical and systemic theology (2014;92) unlike Aristotle, he believes that happiness is the highest good because good life is in question , that how does one lives good and is all in human happiness. The Judaeo-Christian traditional ethics is all about being righteous before God , as God is the central figure when one is living by Christianity is the one who confirm to the normative value, that's good in the eyes of the lord , it what should be done on earth and to live upon. Meanwhile the modern tradition is about benefits and being satisfied, as a human you have to do what will bring happiness and pleasure over the pain. Where else an action to be right it does not have to be determine by the consequences but it should be a right thing to be done, example euthanasia it does not matter if is legal , taking somebody life is wrong irrespective of their condition no matter how much pain they feel according to non-consequentiality or deontological ethics.

Mark Awarded : 15/20

Study pages 92-95 of your tutorial letter for a comprehensive discussion of the nature of ethical theory

Aspect /Criterion	Value %
Structure of Text (Coherence, language, spelling grammar, cogency)	Total <u>5</u> Student's Total <u>5</u> Perfect (see table 1.1)
Substantive content of answer and sources (eg dictionaries, encyclopaedias of philosophy, textbooks, study guide Referencing of sources +	Total <u>12</u> Student's Total <u>10</u> Located Ethics as a branch, discussed its subcategories, described its overall scope of subject and gave an example of a particular Western philosopher's ideas on ethics . * Didn't distinguish between normative and descriptive ethics, or between non-consequentialist (or deontological ethics) and consequentialist ethics
Bibliography / references	Total <u>3</u> Student's Total <u>0</u> no references in text or list

TABLE 1.2 (related to question 2.2)

2.3 From your understanding what is Political Philosophy and what does it deal with? (You may refer to examples and content in your study material and other sources) [20 marks]

Leo Strauss (1959:10) indicates that the aim of political philosophy is 'mankind's greatest objectives, freedom and government or empire.' Therefore, political philosophy is a branch of philosophy that uses a philosophical approach that takes into account the nature of man, and utilising it to establish the state and its people. Political philosophy uses both aspects of sociology and political science and arrives at normative questions about the nature of political authority, liberty and man as a social and political being. One of the biggest controversies in politics is whether the position of power should lay with the people or the authority. Political philosophy began in Greece, basing itself around the idea that man is a social-political animal, and how it would be possible to encompass man's uniqueness in a just and harmonious form of state. Plato explored the establishment of the state based on justice and three foundations the state and their corresponding human needs. Plato's Myth as a means of Persuasion holds testament to this hierarchy. Plato also suggests that instead of brutal force, latent socializing power of religious mythology would achieve this order. Aristotle's two prevailing ideas of the state is that the state is a community and that it is the highest of all communities, upholding the idea that the state is an inevitable occurrence. He also holds political stability and common interest in high regard. Political philosophy draws on the need for authority and direction whilst taking human pursuits into account, ultimately achieving harmony amongst communities and life as a whole.

Total 17/20

Study Pages 119 -124 for a basic discussion on the nature of political philosophy and its central concerns

Aspect /Criterion	Value %
Structure of Essay(Coherence, language, spelling grammar, cogency)	Total 5 Student's Total 5 Perfect (see table at 1.1)
Substantive content of answer and sources (eg dictionaries, encyclopaedias of philosophy, textbooks, study guide Referencing of sources +	Total 12 Student's Total 10 Student doesn't pay attention to the fact that It is WESTERN political philosophy that originates in Greece not Political philosophy itself in order to gain a total score student must additionally show independent and critical consideration, for instance contextualising the question in light of her own experience or questioning or making commentary about the given view in addition to simply summarising it
Bibliography / references	Total 3 Student's Total 2

TABLE 1.3 (related to question 2.3)

3 LECTURER(S) AND CONTACT DETAILS

3.1 Lecturer(s)

Mr. Ndumiso Dladla

Contact details:

Office: Room 09-106, Theo van Wijk Building,
Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria,
SOUTH AFRICA

Postal Address: P O Box 392, UNISA, 0003, SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: +27 12 429 6403

Fax: +27 86 276 4525

e-mail: dladln@unisa.ac.za

Prof. Pascah Mungwini

Contact details:

Office: Room 09-65, Theo van Wijk Building,
Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria,
SOUTH AFRICA

Postal Address: P O Box 392, UNISA, 0003, SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: +27 12 429 6317

Fax: +27 86 276 4525

e-mail: mungwp@unisa.ac.za

Mr. PT Delpoit

Contact details:

Office: Room 09-55, Theo van Wijk Building,
Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria,
SOUTH AFRICA

Postal Address: P O Box 392, UNISA, 0003, SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: +27 12 429 3391

Fax: +27 86 276 4525

e-mail: delpopt@unisa.ac.za

3.2 Department

Should you be unable to reach me, or if you desire to contact the Department, you are welcome to contact our secretary, at the following contact details:

Office: Room 09-51,
 Theo van Wijk Building,
 Muckleneuk Campus,
 Preller Street,
 Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria,
 SOUTH AFRICA
Postal address: P O Box 392, UNISA,
 0003, SOUTH AFRICA
Telephone: +27 12 429 6888
 e-mail: sekhunp@unisa.ac.za /
 philosophy@unisa.ac.za

3.3 University

Please be aware that you will find general Unisa contact details in the studies @ Unisa brochure, and that you should make use of your student number in all correspondence with the University. Contact addresses of the various administrative departments are included in Studies brochure @ Unisa, which you received with your study package. You may contact your lecturers by post, email, telephone or on myUnisa.

Physical/ Postal address: University of South Africa Preller Street Muckleneuk Pretoria City of Tshwane

Fax number: 012 429 4150 / + 27 12 429 4150

Email: study-info@unisa.ac.za Online address: <http://my.unisa.ac.za> Always use your student number when you contact the university

4 CONCLUSION

We hope this tutorial letter has been helpful in guiding your progress in the study of Western philosophy . Don't hesitate to contact your lecturers in order to gain assistance in any respect of your studies. We wish you the greatest success with your studies as well as your forthcoming second assignment where you'll be required to write a philosophical essay.

Cheers!