



Tutorial Letter 203/2/2020

Introduction to Western Philosophy PLS 1501

Semester 2

Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your first and second assignments

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1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Student this tutorial letter contains information for your 2 assignments as well as the final exam. Because of the inordinate extensions of submission dates which were not congruent with the dates pre-set on the system, many of you submitted the assignments via email. The attempt of uploading the large number of assignments on to the system for release led to numerous problems with the effect that many of those who submitted via email will only get their marks but not the assignment back

With regard to 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 the first question underneath 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.**

In the event of your final question on logic , a much more permissive standard was applied. This is because the study guide doesn't itself contain any work dealing explicitly with logic. As a result you were required to consult other materials in order to arrive at an answer. What was examined here was your ability to use the dictionary and other materials to arrive at a satisfactory account of logic.

Assignment two was a more substantial test of your interpretation of a major theme in Ancient Western philosophy.

The exam itself will be administered over a long time period and you will have opportunity to use all your study materials in order to approach the questions which may be drawn from any part of your Tutorial material.

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>

Bibliography / references	<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>
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TABLE 1.1 (related to question 2.1)

1.2 From your understanding what is Metaphysics ? [20 marks]

The word “metaphysics” was first coined by the Greek philosopher, Andronicus of Rhodes, who having just edited a collection of Aristotle’s works on physics (philosophy of nature), used the word to refer to the work that Aristotle had written after his works on “natural philosophy”. In this context, the “meta” in metaphysics means “after” the works on physics. Over the years, however, the meaning of the word has changed into “first philosophy”, thus designating a formal study of being (or reality) in order to discover the fundamental, basic principles, constitutive elements and essential nature of reality. It is assumed that “true” reality (that which is really “real”) lies beyond (or behind) the illusory world of sense experience and ordinary human perception. Used in one sense, metaphysics means “beyond science”, it refers to those aspects of the human world which can not be proven empirically, that is through the senses which allow for measurement, exactness, observability, “disprovability” or experimentation. Instead in this sense metaphysics relates to phenomena which fall into the realm of beliefs rather than knowledge. The British empiricist philosopher David Hume is perhaps the most extreme critic of “metaphysics” he wrote of it once “If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion”. Although Hume developed a logical procedure in order to support his critique, some of his critics have pointed out that his own theory suffers from the very features he would have us disregard metaphysics because of. It is in this sense that it can also be thought of as a metaphysical postulate itself. In that sense “metaphysics” also can be used to describe a particular theory and principles which relate to the interpretation of reality for instance one can speak even of “empiricist metaphysics” or “materialist metaphysics”, this is because despite the avowedly anti-metaphysical postures, they do nevertheless make certain general assumptions about the nature of reality as a starting point, these assumptions themselves are not necessarily the direct result of empirical examination but are the result of certain beliefs about its nature.

1.3 From your understanding what is logic [20 marks]

Logic may be described generally as the set of laws or underpinnings underlying episodes in thinking. One can speak of improper logic suggesting that even where the structure of reasoning is poor or bad it can still be described in logical terms. More narrowly logic specifically describes the discovery of the rules underlying correct or good reasoning. It is in this sense a systemic study of valid rules of inference. It is the study of reasoning or the study of the principles and criteria of valid inference and demonstration. It attempts to distinguish good reasoning from bad reasoning. In philosophy, logic is the branch of study that concerns questions about predictions, identity, truth, quantification, existence, entailment, modality and necessity. Logic in general can be divided into four sub-sets:

Formal logic, informal logic, symbolic logic and mathematical logic. Also logic has major branches which are:

1. Deductive logic or reasoning that concerns what follows necessary from given premises.
2. Inductive logic or reasoning which is the process of deriving a reliable generalization from observations, it is not concerned with validity but with the soundness of inferences.
3. Modal logic or reasoning which is any system of formal logic that attempts to deal with modalities in which propositions can be true or false.
4. Propositional logic or reasoning is concerned only with sentential connectives and logical operators as opposed to predicate logic.
5. Predicate logic allows sentences to be analysed into subject argument in several different ways
6. Fallacies in logic is any sort of mistake in reasoning or inference, or, essentially, anything that causes an argument to go wrong.
7. Paradoxes. Logic has three major doctrines which are institutionism, logicism and logical positiveness. Logicism the theory that all mathematics can ultimately be deducted from purely formal logic axioms. Logical positivism was a movement in western philosophy whose central thesis was the verification principle. In all philosophy, logic is a tool to develop reasonable conclusions based on a given set of data.

3 Comments on Assignment 2

Discuss in detail Plato's allegory of the cave and its philosophical (epistemological and political) significance

I will begin this section by reproducing a copy of the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon in Plato's Republic Book VII, in which the allegory of the cave arises.

I will then include a diagram of the cave to better help you to visualize it before giving you pointers particular to the assignment question. (since two conflicting assignment lengths were included, you were not penalized for your choice of either the shorter length of 1000 words or the longer one of 2000 words)

The Allegory of the Cave Book VII, 514a – 521b SOCRATES- GLAUCON

SOCRATES: AND now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open toward the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

GLAUCON: I see.

SOCRATES: And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

GLAUCON: You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

SOCRATES: Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

GLAUCON: True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads? And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

SOCRATES: And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

GLAUCON: Very true.

SOCRATES: And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

GLAUCON: No question, he replied.

SOCRATES: To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

GLAUCON: That is certain.

SOCRATES: And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look toward the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned toward more real existence, he has a clearer vision -- what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them -- will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him? Far truer. And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

GLAUCON: True, he said.

SOCRATES: And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

GLAUCON: Not all in a moment, he said.

SOCRATES: He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

GLAUCON: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

GLAUCON: Certainly.

SOCRATES: He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

GLAUCON: Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

SOCRATES: And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity him?

GLAUCON: Certainly, he would.

SOCRATES: And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer, "Better to be the poor servant of a poor master," and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

GLAUCON: Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

SOCRATES: Imagine once more, I said, such a one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

GLAUCON: To be sure, he said.

SOCRATES: And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

GLAUCON: No question, he said.

SOCRATES: This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upward to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed -- whether rightly or wrongly, God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

GLAUCON: I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you.

SOCRATES: Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

GLAUCON: Yes, very natural.

SOCRATES: And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavouring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?

GLAUCON: Anything but surprising, he replied.

SOCRATES: Anyone who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees anyone whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.

GLAUCON: That, he said, is a very just distinction.

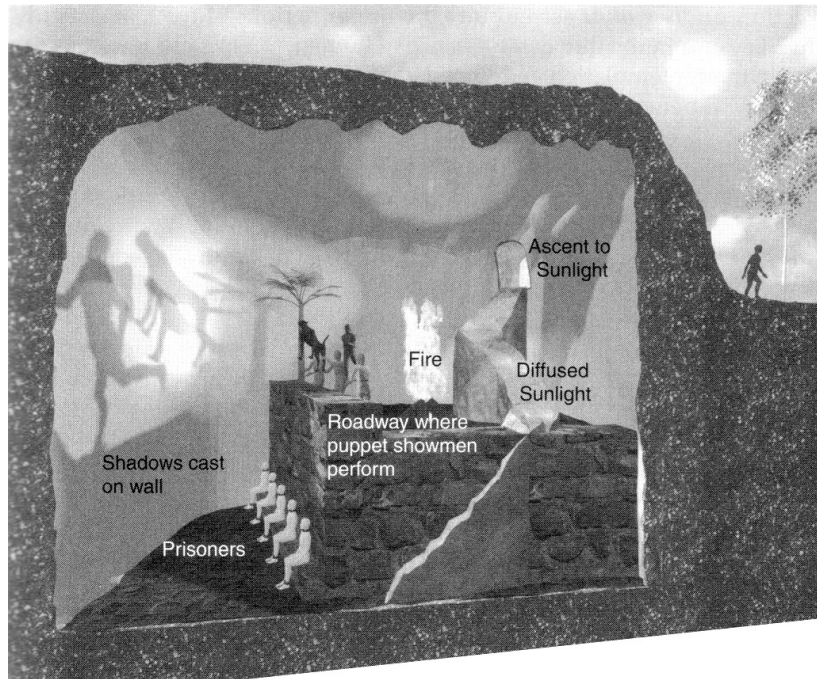
SOCRATES: But then, if I am right, certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.

GLAUCON: They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

SOCRATES: Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or, in other words, of the good.

GLAUCON: Very true.

DIAGRAM OF PLATO'S CAVE



You were not required to reproduce the dialogue as I have done or draw the diagram in your assignment question. I reproduced them here to give you a clearer idea of where the allegory comes from. You would have been required to summarize the narrative in your own words and then to analyse its philosophical implications.

In your answer you need to describe in some detail the plight of the prisoners and the ascent of the prisoner from a condition of being chained to his/her eventual discovery that the sun is the ultimate source of life and light.

In your interpretation of the allegory it is important to link the sun to Plato's notion of the highest Good. Just like the sun is the source of all life and light in the physical world, so the highest Good is the ultimate source of the good life on earth. For Plato, the good life is a combination of the ethical knowledge of ought I to live, and knowledge of (justice) in the political dimension of human existence.

The allegory of the cave represents the human journey from a state of ignorance (represented by the shadowy prison-like existence in the cave) to true knowledge of the highest Good (represented by a vision of sun)

The allegory can be interpreted on various levels:

1. At a metaphysical level it provides an account of the ultimate source and foundation of reality (the sun = the highest Good)
2. At an epistemological level it highlights the process of learning, by acquiring knowledge beyond the realm of sense experience, the realm of uncertainty, ignorance, mere opinion and prejudice.
3. At an ethical level it highlights Plato's belief that the philosopher's knowledge and wisdom must serve society – Knowledge for Plato is never a “selfish thing” - the philosopher must return to the cave to with the intention of serving the highest Good, that is, the interest of society as a whole.
4. At a political level, Plato seeks to show that the ideal state is based on justice as the condition of its possibility. Justice for Plato means “minding your own business” – that is, contributing to society through the development and services of your “natural talents”.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE THE ESSAY

Grammar, Style, Coherence, Spelling	25%
Referencing and Bibliography	15%
Summary Exposition of the Cave	40%
Appraisal of Philosophical Import	30%

4 Information Regarding the Examination

4.1 The module was initially scheduled for a venue-based examination. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the examination will now be conducted online as follows:

1. The examination will be conducted as a portfolio examination based on an examination question paper.
2. The examination will be managed on the myUnisa platform.
3. The date of the examination will be **Tuesday the 3rd of November (03/11/2020)** starting at 16:30. The duration of the examination will be 24 hours and you must thus upload your exam before **16:30 on Wednesday the 4th of July 03/11/2020**. If you have any problems during the time of the exam do not hesitate to write me an email, I will answer within 30mins during the entire 24 hour period.

4.2 Your exam consists of 3 QUESTIONS.

SECTION A which consists of **ONE QUESTION is COMPULSORY** and counts **50 marks** (This will be a generalised variety of question pertaining to any single or multiple aspect of your studies in Western philosophy.

In **SECTION B** you will be given a choice to answer **ANY TWO of the FOUR QUESTIONS** pertaining more particularly to themes and problems in Ancient and Medieval Western philosophy

All 3 answers must be submitted as part of A SINGLE pdf DOCUMENT.

Please remember to download the plagiarism declaration available on MyUNISA and include a completed version in your final submission. While you will not be penalised if for some reason you are unable to download and attach the plagiarism declaration we must state that any plagiarism detected in any part of the answer sheet file will lead to an automatic 0%/ fail

4.3 Steps to follow to access to the examination

The answers to this examination MCQ may only be submitted online.

On the day of the examination, do the following:

1. 15 minutes before the start of the examination, logon to myExams (<https://myexams.unisa.ac.za/portal>) with your credentials (i.e., student number and password).
2. In the top right corner of the page, click on the “Sites” button. A popup window will appear. Choose the name of the module examination site.
3. On the left-navigation (menu section) of the examination site, click the “Online Assessment” link.

4. On the Online Assessment page, click the examination link under the section “Take an Assessment”. This will take you to the instructions page and allow you to start the examination. Click “Begin Assessment” to start.

5. Read through the questions presented on the page and select your answer from the provided options or add text when requested.

6. You must complete all the examination questions, without leaving the site.

A timer on the Online Assessment tool will assist you to keep track of your progress. Save your answers on every page. The last page will give you the option to Submit all your answers. The examination will stop when your timer runs out or if the examination session is finished, even if you have not reached the last question.

If you do experience a technical interruption, logout of myExams. DO NOT just close the page. If you logged out properly, you could login again, navigate back to your examination and resume where you last stopped, if time allows.

7. Remember to start your second session as soon as possible.

8. If you submit the examination successfully, you will receive an email confirmation in your myLife email account.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ANSWER FILE

Follow these steps to submit your portfolio file.

1. Access myUnisa at <https://my.unisa.ac.za/portal> and login using your student number and myUnisa password

2. Click on the “myAdmin” tab in the top navigation

3. In the “Assessments” submenu, click on the “Assessment Info” tool in the drop-down list

- A list of all available assessments will display
- Locate the section for UNISA summative assessments at the bottom of the list
- Find the corresponding portfolio number for your module
- Click on the Submit link in the Action column and follow the steps described below.

Step 1: Load the answer file from your PC to myUnisa

- Click on the Browse button next to File Name
- In the Choose File dialog box, select the file you want to upload, and then click OK
- Select the correct file format from the File Format drop-down list. Most modules only allow PDF formatted files to be uploaded.
- Click on the Continue button.

Step 2: Verify the file details for final submission of your answer file

Use this step to verify that you are uploading the correct answer file to the correct course and assessment number.

- Click on the Continue button to submit your answer file. If you do not click Continue,

no submission action will take place.

- Large files will take longer to upload than smaller files. Please be patient after you've clicked Continue.
- If the wrong details, e.g. file name, appear on the screen, click Back to restart the file upload process.

Step 3: Assessment submission report

This is your proof that your take-home answer file was submitted. It is advisable to print this page or make a screen capture for record purposes. A copy of this page will also be emailed to your myLife email account

5 LECTURER(S) AND CONTACT DETAILS

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6 CONCLUSION

I hope this tutorial letter has been helpful in guiding your progress in the study of Western philosophy. The extraordinary global conditions which have unfolded this year have without a doubt affected our studies adversely. I however hope that with some extra time at home you have had opportunity to think through your study materials and read them thoroughly. The exam will not be a test of memory but rather your understanding of what you have been studying and your ability to apply it to so-called everyday questions. Don't hesitate to contact me in order to get assistance in any respect of your studies.

Best Wishes
Mr Dladla