PHI 201 Spring 2016 Syllabus

## History of Philosophy I

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| Location | AH005 |
| Instructor | Dan Sheffler |
| Email | daniel\_sheffler@georgetowncollege.edu |
| Web | <http://sage.georgetowncollege.edu/course/view.php?id=2311> |
| Schedule | <http://dansheffler.com/phi201schedule/> |
| Presentations | <http://dansheffler.com/phi201presentations/> |
| Semester | Spring 2016 |
| Credit Hours | 3 |

## Required Texts

* *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve, (Hackett, 2005), ISBN: 0872207692.
* Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, (Oxford, 1991) ISBN: 9780199537822.
* Anselm, *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans, (Oxford, 1998), ISBN: 0192825259.

## Course Description and Learning Outcomes

*From the Catalog*: Survey of the development of Western philosophical thought within its cultural contexts from ancient Greece through the Middle Ages. Exploration of foundational approaches to questions of reality, virtue, knowledge, God, faith, and reason. This course carries a Writing Flag (W) in the Foundations and Core Program

*From Me*: In the beginning of this course we will cover the ancient atomists, Eleatics, and Pythagoreans. Before midterm, we read several major works by Plato and Aristotle. After midterm, we will read Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas.

We will go through the major themes of each period and thinker synoptically, but at every stage I have chosen to focus on the particular theme of *the cosmos* as a way to bring all these thinkers together and to understand the role and vision of philosophy in the ancient and medieval world. This means that for every thinker we will be asking the question: how does he conceive the structure of the universe as a whole? I hope this will open our eyes to the high degree of agreement amongst ancient and medieval thinkers on this score and the high degree of difference between them and us.

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## Learning Outcomes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Learning Outcome | Assessment |
| To gain an understanding of the primary questions, terminology, and theories in ancient and medieval philosophy | Reading Quizzes |
| To learn to carefully read philosophical texts | Reading Quizzes |
| To gain the capacity to communicate difficult philosophical thinking in clear, concise prose. | Midterm and Final Papers |

## Grading

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading Quizzes | 30% |
| Midterm Paper | 35% |
| Final Paper | 35% |

The first portion of your grade will come from regular (short) reading quizzes. These will be completed on Moodle and will typically consist of five multiple-choice questions on the reading for the day. These quizzes are due before class on the day when the corresponding reading assignment is due. There is a time limit on these quizzes and they can only be taken once, so it is advisable that you complete them just as soon as you complete your reading. You will not have enough time to search the reading for the answers if you have not read it, but you may keep the reading assignment open to aid in the completion of the quiz. You will quickly find that you really must do the reading and do it quite carefully to do well on these quizzes.

At the middle and end of the semester, you will submit a short (1500–2000 words) paper on Moodle reflecting on any topic we have covered in class. I will provide further guidance on this paper as the due date approaches.

**Grading Scale:**

(I round all values to the nearest whole percent.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 100–90% |
| B | 89–80% |
| C | 79–70% |
| D | 69–60% |
| E | 59–0% |

## Attendance

Although attendance does not compose its own segment of the grade, it is mandatory and failure to attend class will adversely impact your grade. Role will be taken at the beginning of every class period. Perfect attendance will result in an extra credit of +2 percentage points. The first 2 unexcused absences will not count against you, but beginning with the 3rd absence, each absence will subtract 2 percentage points from your final grade. This goes to a **limit of 7 unexcused absences** at which point you can no longer pass the class. For your reference:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Absences | Percentage Change to Final Grade |
| 0 |  |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |

I keep track of absences by calling roll at the beginning of each class. If you do not respond when I call your name (perhaps because you are not there) you will be marked as absent. This means that if you walk in late it is your responsibility to check in with me each and every time. Lateness, especially if egregious or repeated, may be counted as an absence for the day. You are always welcome to look at your record and I encourage you to do so because it is your responsibility to keep track of how many absences I have recorded. This is especially important for students who are in danger of failing the class because of absences. I probably will not notice when you have six absences, so I am unlikely to notify you when you are in danger of failing.

Whenever a student knows in advance that s/he will miss class (as for a scheduled college-sponsored activity), the student should discuss the absence with me prior to the event, and the student’s participation in the event should be confirmed by a communication from the event sponsor. When a student’s participation in college-sponsored activities or other scheduled events will require multiple absences, the student should discuss the potential for those absences with me prior to the end of the first week of classes.

Students missing class or an exam due to an excused absence (e.g. for sickness) bear the responsibility of informing me about their absence within one week following the period of the absence and of providing appropriate documentation for the absence. Excused absences are not taken into account in the above adjustment to the final grade. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to make up missed work. Make up work (including exams) must be submitted within one week of return to class. In general, I do not excuse on-line assignments.

## E-mail and Internet

You are expected to have an active e-mail account that you check regularly. Section related announcements will be made via e-mail (e.g. if I am sick, pointers for home work, change in due dates). Also, e-mail is the best way for contacting me outside of class.

You are expected to have access to a stable internet connection as reading quizzes are carried out through Moodle. I will not reset quizzes because of internet trouble (doing so is simply too easy to abuse and has been in the past). Instead, I will be dropping the lowest reading quiz score for everyone.

## Respectful Behavior

Mature, respectful behavior is expected in class. The primary concern is that all students are able to enjoy a focused, helpful classroom. This means that I expect you will among other things: arrive to class on time, stay awake, refrain from taking cell phone calls, playing games, or doing work for other classes. I will warn you once during a semester if a particular behavior is disruptive. If this behavior happens again, I may ask you to leave resulting in an absence for the day.

Class time is primarily focused on discussion of the material for which I expect you to be fully engaged. For this reason, I prohibit the use of electronic devices in class.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating robs other students of a fair grade. If it is determined that a student has cheated, all students involved will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. If the case is egregious, I will direct the case to the appropriate university dean for official sanction. Please see the Academic Honesty Policy in your Student Handbook.

## Disability Accommodations

If you are registered to receive accommodations for a disability, please discuss them with me during the first week of class. You will need official documentation from Lloyd Clark in the Wellness Center (x7074).

## Schedule

(See [separate document](http://dansheffler.com/phi201schedule/) for our projected schedule of topics and readings.)