
PHIL 100

Introduction to Philosophy

Catalogue Description

Examination of some of the central issues and speculative theories in the philosophical tradition.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Question their own and others' opinions about and responses to the world.
- Apply the methods of the discipline of Philosophy to material outside it.
- Identify and evaluate arguments using philosophically appropriate concepts and techniques and to formulate logical arguments on the same basis.
- Distinguish between various philosophical positions and their implications.
- Verbally communicate philosophical positions and use collaborative discussions to advance philosophical knowledge.
- Have a broad knowledge of the historical trajectory of Western philosophy.
- Articulate the applicability of philosophical reasoning to contemporary life.

Assignments and Grading

Exams (2)	30%
Reading Quizzes (lowest 2 dropped)	20%
1-Page Argument Papers	25%
Applied Philosophy Presentation	15%
Class Participation	5%
Discussion facilitation	5%

Grading Scale

93.0 – 100 = A
90.0 – 92.99 = A-
87.0 – 89.99 = B+
83.0 – 86.99 = B
80.0 – 82.99 = B-
77.0 – 79.99 = C+
73.0 – 76.99 = C
70.0 – 72.99 = C-
67.0 – 69.00 = D+
63.0 – 66.99 = D
60.0 – 62.99 = D-
< 60 = F

*Note that I do not round grades up, period. Please don't ask!

Spring 2016

TTH 10 – 11:40 AND 1:40 – 3:20

Instructor: Erin Tarver

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Phone: 770-784-8369

Office: Humanities 204

Office Hours: TTH 3:30 – 5 (and by appointment)

Materials

de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*, trans. Borde & Malovany-Chevalier.

Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Hackett.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, ed. Davis.

Plato. *The Republic*, trans. Joe Sachs.

Milestones

1/20

Deadline to Sign Up for Applied Philosophy Presentation Date

2/25

Deadline to turn in Argument Paper #2

3/3

Midterm Exam

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Applied Philosophy Presentation

4/19

Deadline to turn in Argument Paper #4

4/27 or 5/3

Final Exam

Assignment Descriptions

Quizzes

Each day, you will have assigned reading that needs to be done before you come to class. There will be unannounced reading quizzes (on that day's assigned material, or on the previous day's lecture) over the course of the semester, the lowest two of which will be dropped from your grade. **Note that I do not schedule make-up quizzes without documentation of illness or official school trips.**

Exams

There will be two exams in this class: a mid-term and a final. All exams are cumulative.

1-Page Argument Papers

Students must complete FOUR one-page argument papers over the course of the semester, two of which must be completed prior to the midterm, and each of which must be on a text by a different author. ONE of the papers submitted prior to the midterm may be revised for re-grading, provided that it is re-submitted within a week of receiving an initial grade and comments. The goal of this assignment is to develop your ability to express and engage with philosophical ideas in a concise, written form; as such, NO secondary source use is permitted. In each paper you will develop ONE argument in response to an argument found in the assigned reading. Your papers will be scored on the basis of clarity, argumentative effectiveness, and the extent to which they demonstrate accurate understanding of the text at hand. Further instructions are available on Blackboard and will be distributed in class.

Applied Philosophy Presentations

In the course of our reading of each major text this semester, students will be responsible for giving a presentation or leading an activity that demonstrates how that text and its ideas might be usefully applied to contemporary life. To get good marks on this assignment, you need to do 3 things: 1) make a clear argument about how the philosophical piece you address should or could be applied to contemporary life (i.e., how should it change our approach to some problem? Does its application show that it must be right/wrong/correct/incorrect?); 2) accurately represent the philosophical piece you are applying to contemporary life; 3) engage your classmates interactively or conversationally. Unconventional presentations or activities are encouraged, and will be awarded additional points. Students will give their presentations in pairs or groups; you will be required to submit a peer evaluation of your partner's contribution.

Participation

Philosophy is fundamentally conversational. Thus, regular, engaged participation in our ongoing conversation is a required element of this class. Participation in this class requires, minimally, that you do the following:

- Come to class regularly, and do not miss more than 2 classes for any reason.
- Refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices in class unless given explicit permission to do so.
- Regularly (either in class or on our class Facebook page) contribute to the conversation by:
 - o Asking questions
 - o Making comments informed by the text (and citing it when you can)
 - o LISTENING to your classmates and responding to them
 - o Taking care not to dominate the conversation
- Bring your book/materials to class
- Be on time
- Actively participate in small group activities

Please note that **students who never speak up in our large-group discussions will earn, at most, a C for their participation.**

Discussion Facilitation

In pairs, students will be responsible for leading our class discussion **two times** during the semester, having met outside of class to prepare. With your partner, you will formulate philosophical questions that lead the class to analyze a key philosophical idea in the assigned reading. Each of the philosophical questions you raise must be related to **central concerns**

in the assigned reading. **At no point is your group to lecture the class or spend lots of time summarizing/regurgitating what the author says. You can setup questions briefly by looking at specific passages with the class, but please do not think of this as a presentation. Summarizing and lecturing the class will result in a low grade.** The goal is to figure out the most interesting philosophical questions that we can discuss in light of the reading, and to sustain a focused conversation with these questions for the length of the class. Further instructions are available on Blackboard and will be distributed in class. **You must sign up for your discussion facilitation dates by 1/19.**

Schedule

1/12: Intro, What is Philosophy?

1/14: Gramsci, “Notes for an Introduction and Approach to the Study of Philosophy” (BB)

1/19: Plato, pg 1-top 3; Book I, pg 17-27

1/21: Plato, Book I, pg 28– pg 37, line 344D; pg 40, line 348C – pg 48

1/26: Plato, Book II, pg 59, line 367E – pg 76

1/28: Plato, Book III, pg 105, line 412A – pg 111; Book V, pg 168, line 472B – pg 178

2/2: Plato, Book VI, pg 183, line 487B – pg 190, line 494B [AP]

2/4: Plato, Book VII, pg 210 – pg 217, line 521D [AP]

2/9: Augustine, *Confessions* Book XI, section X-XXX (BB)

2/11: Anselm and Aquinas (BB)

2/16: Descartes, Meditation I, pg 13-17

2/18: Descartes, Meditation II, pg 17-20

2/23: Descartes, Meditation III, pg 24 – pg 31, line 46

2/25: Descartes, Meditation IV, 35 – 42; Meditation VI, pg 51, line 78 – pg 52 [AP]

3/1: Review Day

3/3: MIDTERM EXAM

3/7 – 3/11: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

3/15: James, “The Will to Believe” (BB)

3/17: Douglass, Ch I-III

3/22: Douglass, Ch IV – VIII (esp. VII)

3/24: Douglass, Ch IX and X [AP]

3/29: Douglass, Ch XI, and Davis, “First Lecture on Liberation,” pg 45-49 (in Douglass book)

3/31: Davis, “First Lecture on Liberation,” continued [AP]

4/5: Beauvoir, Introduction, pg 1-9

4/7: Beauvoir, Introduction, pg 9-17

4/12: Beauvoir, Biological Data, pg 21-26 and 44-48

4/14: Beauvoir, Childhood, 283-285, 301-312 [AP]

4/19: Beauvoir, Conclusion, 753-758, 764 – 766 [AP]

Class Policies

Email Policy

I strive to stay in touch with you outside of class hours, and will generally attempt to answer messages within 24 hours. Please note, however, that I will not respond to questions sent the evening before a scheduled test or exam. Additionally, I ***do not discuss grades via email***. Please make an appointment to see me if you would like to discuss any course grades.

Make-Up Work

Students may make up missed work on two (and only two) conditions: documented illness (a note from student health services or other physician good for the day in question), or official college trips (i.e., athletics trips, etc.) for which you have given me advanced notice. I **do not** allow students to make up work because of family vacations, etc., and college policy forbids rescheduling exams for such reasons. This means that you would be wise to be judicious with your absences; in the event that you must miss class for personal reasons, know that the two lowest quiz grades are dropped.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is extremely important, and so violations of the Oxford College Honor Code will not be tolerated. I will not hesitate to report any such violations to the Honor Council. Infractions of the Honor Code include plagiarism, cheating, seeking or giving unauthorized assistance, and lying related to academic matters. Further information on Honor Code infractions and procedures are available in the Oxford College Student Handbook, and online: http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/index.dot

Disability Access

I encourage any students with disabilities that may impact their access to or performance in any component of this course to register with Oxford College's ADSR, and to let me know about necessary accommodations as soon as possible. Additionally, please be aware that my office is located on the second floor of a building without disability access. I will, accordingly, be happy to make arrangements to meet with any student on the first floor of Humanities Hall, should this be necessary.