

PHIL 100

Introduction to Philosophy

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Office Hours: 9am-12pm Mon. and Wed.

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Overview

In this introductory course in philosophy, we will read texts in the history of philosophy in order to critically examine the theoretical frameworks we use to understand the world and ourselves. We will use the readings to discuss the nature of the self, what sort of knowledge and truth there is, and what truly exists/what constitutes reality. While you are expected to learn prominent views in the history of philosophy, a key aspect of the class will be learning how to develop philosophical thinking within yourself and learning to see the world through a philosophical lens.

Goals

- 1) To understand key concepts/theories in the history of philosophical thinking. **(Knowledge)**
- 2) To understand how to lead and participate in a successful philosophical dialogue. **(Academic Leadership)**
- 3) To learn how to clearly articulate your own philosophical ideas in writing, speaking, and in conversation with others. **(Critical Thinking & Communication)**
- 4) To learn how to formulate and develop a thoughtful philosophical argument by reading a text closely and engaging secondary literature. **(Research & Scholarship)**

Requirements

Discussion Facilitation	15%	Research Paper	15%
Daily Assignments	5%	Midterm	30%
Participation	5%	Final Exam	30%

Grading Scale

94 – 100 = A	77-79 = C+
90 – 93 = A-	74-76 = C
87 – 89 = B+	70-73 = C-
84 – 86 = B	60 – 69 = D
80 – 83 = B-	< 60 = F

Note: I never round final grades or curve grades on assignments.

Required Texts

The following texts are required for the course. Additionally, there are a couple pdfs on Blackboard that you will need to print.

Plato, *Republic*, 9781585102617

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 9780192806963

William James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, 0140437355

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 9780199555833

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, 9780300115468

Patricia Churchland, *Touching a Nerve*, 9780393349443

Important Dates

Midterm Exam, Oct 15th

Research Paper, December 7th by noon

Final Exam, 10J: December 15th 9am

01J: December 16th 9am

Daily Assignments

These assignments will differ throughout the semester. Sometimes they will consist of reading quizzes and in-class work, and sometimes they will be assigned homework (i.e., reflection papers). Other than homework assignments, they will not be announced in advance. Their aim is to gauge your preparation for class and to develop your ability to clearly express philosophical ideas. Your lowest score will be dropped. **If you miss one of these assignments due to an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero. If you are not in the classroom when we start a quiz, you will receive a zero. If you have an excused absence, you have one week to take a makeup quiz. YOU are responsible for scheduling a makeup quiz within the one-week window. After a week has passed, you will receive a zero.**

Research Paper

You will be required to **develop, research, and write a 5-page paper**. We will spend a class day discussing how to write a successful philosophy paper. Additionally, you can consult the 'Assignments' folder in Blackboard for a document containing all of the details of this assignment. Briefly, **you must develop an argument about ONE idea from ONE of the authors read in our class, and it must make use of two academic secondary sources on your topic.**

Exams

There will be two exams. Exams will consist of fill-in-the-blank, short answer and essay questions. Your final exam will be partially cumulative: essay questions will involve all authors read.

Note from Academic Services:

"Students must have the permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs to reschedule a final exam. Permission is normally granted for medical reasons or for participating in educational programs. Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam."

Attendance & Participation

Your active participation, critical engagement, and attendance are crucial for this class to be a success. Thus, you are expected to have done all of the reading prior to class and come prepared to discuss the material. **Your participation grade will be based on how frequently you attend class, whether you cause distractions, your level of preparation, and the degree to which you are attentive and engaged in all classroom activities and discussion. You will receive one participation grade at midterm and one participation grade at the end of the semester. Your overall participation grade will be an average of these two grades. An absence is excused only if you are 1) involved in an official Oxford event (sports, for example), 2) have a note from health services, or 3) have a note/e-mail from a dean excusing you from class. You are allowed one unexcused absence prior to midterm and one between midterm and the end of the semester. Each additional absence lowers your participation grade by two letter grades (20 points).**

For a rubric and detailed instructions, see our Blackboard homepage.

Discussion Facilitation

You will form **groups of three or four** during the first week of class (of your own choosing). Your groups will sign-up for two days during the semester when you will lead a good portion of our class discussion. There will only be one facilitation group per day, so dates will be first come, first serve. Groups will sign-up for their days on Signup Genius (there's a link to this website on our Blackboard homepage), and when you sign-up for a day you will indicate who is in your group. You are responsible for remembering your facilitation days. If you fail to remember your facilitation day, you will receive a zero. Any group members who don't attend class on the day of the facilitation will receive a zero. Details for this assignment can be found in the 'Assignments' folder in Blackboard.

In general, the goal of this assignment is for your group to formulate your own philosophical questions for the class to discuss that are directly related to the assigned reading. You **WILL NOT** be lecturing the class or doing a presentation/explaining what's in the reading. You will mainly be graded on your ability to initiate and sustain a philosophical discussion with your peers that examines the philosophical content of the assigned reading. You must meet outside of class in order to prepare.

Additional Information & Classroom Policies

Turning in Assignments

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class the day they are due. **I will not accept assignments that are e-mailed to me (unless you are asked to e-mail them).** Any assignment that is not turned in by you (in person) at the beginning of class is late and will be penalized. For daily assignments, late work is not accepted.

For all assignments: each day late = one letter grade off (-10pts).

Electronics

You are not allowed to have laptops or cell phones out during class.

On days when the reading comes from a pdf, **you are responsible for printing the document and having it with you in class.**

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating/plagiarism is not tolerated. Any form of cheating or plagiarism (no matter the assignment) will forfeit any possible credit for that assignment, and following school policy you will be reported to the Honor Council (Please consult the Academic Honor Code in the Student Handbook). If you have ANY questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism, don't hesitate to contact me. Or, visit someone in the writing center.

Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Required Reading
1	Basics of Philosophy	August 27 th Syllabus/Branches of Philosophical Inquiry
2	Basics of Philosophy: Methods and Terminology	September 1 st - Gramsci (pdf) 3 rd – Plato Book I
3	Greek Philosophy	8 th – Plato Book II and III (selections) 10 th – Plato Book V
4	Greek Philosophy	15 th – Plato Book VII 17 th – Plato Book X
5	Greek Philosophy Medieval Philosophy	22 nd – Aristotle (pdf) 24 th – Aquinas and Anselm (both pdfs)
6	Early Modern Philosophy Early Modern Philosophy	29 th – Descartes (Meditations 1 and 2) October 1 st – Descartes (Meditation 3)

7	Early Modern Philosophy	6 th – Descartes (Meditation 4 and 5) 8 th – Descartes (Meditation 6)
8	Midterm	13 th – No Class, fall break 15 th – Midterm
9	Pragmatism	20 th – James, “What Pragmatism Means” 22 nd – James, “Pragmatism’s Conception of Truth”
10	Pragmatism Writing a Philosophical Essay	27 th – James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” 29 th – Portmore and Horban (both pdfs)
11	Social Philosophy	November 3 rd – Du Bois, Chapters 1 and 3 5 th – Du Bois, Chapters 6 and Appendix I
12	Existentialism	10 th – Sartre, pgs. 17-36 12 th – Sartre, pgs. 37-54
13	Political Philosophy	17 th – Hannah Arendt (pdf) 19 th – Hannah Arendt (pdf)
14	Philosophy of Mind	24 th – Churchland, Chapter 2 26 th – No Class, Thanksgiving
15	Philosophy of Mind	December 1 st – Churchland, Chapter 4 3 rd – Churchland, Chapter 7 8 th – Review Day