

**Instructor: Dr. John Kress**

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Office Hours: M W 2:00 - 3:00 pm or by appointment. If you want to talk about philosophy, feel free to stop by my office and see if I'm around, or catch me around campus.

**Course Description:** The term "philosophy" comes from the Greek *philosophia* meaning "love of wisdom," and has for 2500 years been the name of the highest form of intellectual endeavor in the West. In this class, we will read words by some of the great philosophers from three periods in the history of philosophy, beginning at the origin of philosophy among the ancient Greeks, with Plato and Aristotle, turning to the early modern philosophy, represented by Descartes and Hume, and ending with late-modern or "postmodern" thought, in Nietzsche and Heidegger. We will see how the Western quest for wisdom results in a rough consensus on what the basic philosophical questions and issues are while at the same time leading to serious disagreements between philosophers on the answers to these questions.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To gain a preliminary understanding of what philosophy is.
2. To gain experience recognizing and understanding philosophical arguments.
3. To gain experience in making philosophical arguments.
4. To get a sense of the basic shape of the history of philosophy.

**Required Texts:** It is important to get the right translation.*Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. Thomas G. West & Grace Starry West, Cornell, ISBN 0801485746Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, Eric Salem, Focus Press, ISBN 0941051692Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs, Focus Press, ISBN 1585100358Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Cambridge, ISBN 0521358124Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom Beauchamp, Oxford, ISBN 0198752482Nietzsche, *Basic Writings*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Modern Library, ISBN 0679783393Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell, HarperCollins, ISBN 0060637633**Course Assignments and Requirements:**

**Reading:** Most of the texts we will be reading are fairly difficult. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to do your reading. 15 pages of Aristotle is equal to 30 pages of many other writers! By the same token, don't expect to completely understand a difficult philosophical text on a first reading. Take your time, read slowly and carefully, think about (and talk about) the reading, and when you can, re-read.

**Position Cards:** Every class, you are to turn in a 3 x 5 note card which should have your name, the name of the author and the reading, and a short reflection on the day's reading. This reflection can be an argument, a question or questions, something the reading made you think about, etc. The purpose of this is for you to think a little in writing (one side of a note card) about each reading. I recommend you write your position card at the same time you do your reading (as opposed to right before class). I will often use the position cards to take attendance. Please try to write legibly!

**Attendance:** Regular class attendance is both required and important. Much of our best learning is done in class. Students should attend every class, if possible. Your overall class grade will be adjusted according to the number of unexcused absences you have, as follows: 0 = +4, 1 = +2, 2 = +1, 3 = 0, 4 = -2, 5 = -4, 6 = -7, 7 = -11, 8 = -16, etc. Excused absences will be given for 1. medical or family emergencies, 2. religious observances, and 3. events authorized by the College. For an absence to be excused, you must provide appropriate documentation, in advance in cases of 2. and 3. above.

**Class Participation:** All students are expected to come to class having done the reading carefully and prepared to listen and take part in class discussion. You will find you get a lot more out of class if you have completed the reading. While it is not required that everyone be equally vocal in class, everyone is expected to participate in discussion to some extent. If you feel you have nothing to say, bring up the issue you already discussed on your position card!

**Reflection Paper (1):** 600 words. A reflection paper is a short paper in which you bring your own thinking to bear on an assigned topic without use of any outside material. I want you to simply and seriously reflect on the question that I ask and to think about your answer to it as carefully as you can.

**Exposition/Argument Papers (3):** 900-1200 words (include word count on title page). An exposition/argument paper is a paper in which the primary purpose is to demonstrate your understanding of a philosophical text. You will do this by presenting a critical exposition of the philosopher's views and arguments along with your own critical response. The word "critical" here does not mean a negative or hostile response, but a careful, thoughtful, examined response ("critical", from the Greek *krinein*, "to examine", "to distinguish"). As a result of your critical

examination, you may of course disagree with a philosopher, but you don't have to. We will have one paper on each of the periods of philosophy we are covering, i.e. one on Plato or Aristotle, one on Descartes or Hume, and one on Nietzsche or Heidegger.

**Exams (2):** We will have two exams, a midterm and a final. They will cover the first half of the course and the second, respectively (i.e. the final is not comprehensive). Both will have the same format and will be a combination of multiple answer questions (similar to multiple choice, except that one or more of the answers a-d can be correct, or all, or none) and short essay questions.

**Re-writes and Paper Conferences:** You may re-write any of the exposition/argument papers. Before re-writing, you must meet with me to go over the paper (paper conferences usually take around 15-20 minutes). Re-writes are due no later than two weeks after the due date of the original paper. When submitting a re-write, you must submit the original paper with my comments along with the new draft.

### **Grading and Evaluation:**

Scale: Grading will be according to the standard scale of A, B, C, D & F with + and -.

Breakdown:	Position Cards	10%
	Class Participation	10%
	Reflection Paper	10%
	1st Paper	14%
	2nd Paper	14%
	3rd Paper	14%
	Midterm exam	14%
	Final exam	14%

Late Papers: I will accept late papers, but the paper grade will be reduced by one letter grade per class day the paper is late.

**Honor Code:** As with all classes at Oxford, the Student Honor Code will be taken very seriously in this class. You can find an online copy of the Code here:

[http://www.oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current\\_students/academics/academic\\_success/honor\\_code.dot](http://www.oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/academics/academic_success/honor_code.dot)

### **Important Dates:**

Wed, August 27	first class
Mon, September 1	labor day
Wed, September 3	last day for course add/swap
Mon-Tues, October 13-14	midsemester break
Fri, October 17	last day to drop without an academic penalty
Wed-Fri, November 26-30	Thanksgiving Break
Mon, December 8	last class
Mon, December 15	final exam: 9:00 - 12:00

## Reading Schedule:

1	wed, aug 27	First class. Go over syllabus.	
2	fri, aug 29	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> 2a-9e	REFLECTION PAPER DUE
3	wed, sept 3	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> 10a-16a	
4	fri, sept 5	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 17a-24a	
5	mon, sept 8	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 24b-35d	
6	wed, sept 10	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 35e-42a	
7	fri, sept 12	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 57a-69e	
8	mon, sept 15	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 70a-88c	
9	wed, sept 17	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 88c-102a	
10	fri, sept 19	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 102b-118a	
11	mon, sept 22	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk I	
12	wed, sept 24	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk I-II	
13	fri, sept 26	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk II	
14	mon, sept 29	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk III chs. 4-12	
15	wed, oct 1	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk IV ch 3, V 1-4	
16	fri, oct 3	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk VI	FIRST PAPER DUE
17	mon, oct 6	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk VIII chs 1-6, IX ch 8	
18	wed, oct 8	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk IX ch 9, X chs 6-8	
19	fri, oct 10	Descartes, <i>Regulae</i> 1-5; <i>Discourse on the Method</i> 1-3	
20	wed, oct 15	Descartes, <i>Discourse on the Method</i> 4-6	
21	fri, oct 17	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 1st Meditation	
22	mon, oct 20	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 2nd Meditation	
23	wed, oct 22	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 3rd Meditation	
24	fri, oct 24	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 4th Meditation	
25	mon, oct 27	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
26	wed, oct 29	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections 1-3	
27	fri, oct 31	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 4-5	
28	mon, nov 3	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Section 8	
29	wed, nov 5	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 10	
30	fri, nov 7	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 12	SECOND PAPER DUE
31	mon, nov 10	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Preface, Part 1 "On the Prejudices of Philosophers"	
32	wed, nov 12	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 1 cont., Part 2 "The Free Spirit"	
33	fri, nov 14	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 2 cont., Part 3 "What is Religious?"	
34	mon, nov 17	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 5 "Natural History of Morals"	
35	wed, nov 19	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 6 "We Scholars"	
36	fri, nov 21	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 9 "What is Noble"	
37	mon, nov 24	Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", pp. 217-239	
38	mon, dec 1	Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", pp. 240-265	
39	wed, dec 3	Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", pp. 311-326	
40	fri, dec 5	Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", pp. 327-241	THIRD PAPER DUE
41	mon, dec 8	Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking"	