PHIL 105-04: Introduction to Philosophy

Lecture Hours: MWF 11 – 11:50, Ritter Hall 223
Office Hours: MF 12-1 (and by appointment), Adorjan Hall, Second Floor Lounge
Instructor: Mr. Jeremy Skrzypek
Instructor's Email: Jskrzyp1@slu.edu

Course Description:

This course will be a rigorous introduction to the methods of philosophical inquiry and the main issues within the discipline of philosophy. It will address questions such as:

What is an argument? What makes an argument valid or sound?

How ought we to live or what does the good life consist in?

What sorts of things exist and what are they like?

What are we? Bodies? Souls? Body-Soul Composites?

What can I know and how can I know it?

Is there a God? Is His knowledge of the future compatible with my own free choice?

Our approach in investigating these issues will be to read from the texts of some of the most famous philosophers in history: the Ancient Greek philosophers *Plato* and *Aristotle*, as well as selections from later-ancient and medieval philosophers *Augustine, Boethius, Anselm* and *Aquinas*. Although we will be concentrating on how these questions have been addressed historically, the answers we will consider are still relevant for contemporary philosophy as well as our lives today. This will become apparent both from our class discussions and the written assignments throughout the course.

Course Objectives:

Over the course of the semester we will attempt to achieve three main objectives:

(1) Students will be introduced to, and have at least a basic understanding of, the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle as well as a familiarity with some of the issues addressed by later-ancient and medieval philosophers.

(2) Students will be able to identify arguments in philosophical texts and give written evaluations of those arguments based on the strength of the premises, the relations between those premises, and the arguments' susceptibility or immunity to objections.

(3) Students will learn how to think clearly and creatively when addressing philosophical issues and begin to develop the ability to form and defend their own arguments.

Required Texts:

1. Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Fourth edition (Hackett Publishing)

2. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, Second edition, translated by John M. Cooper (Hackett)

3. Plato, *Republic,* Second edition, translated by C.D.C. Reeve (Hackett)

4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Second edition, translated by Terence Irwin (Hackett)

5. Various articles available on SLU Global as indicated below*

Note on texts: Students are expected to bring their own copies of the assigned readings to each class. *This includes the articles available online*. It is the responsibility of each student to print out these documents ahead of time and bring physical, hard copies to the appropriate classes, *as the use of laptops, smartphones, or other electronic devices will not be permitted during class time.*

Assignments:

15% = *Two Out-of-Class Assignments*.

For each out of class assignment students are to write a short essay (roughly two double-spaced pages) on a particular idea discussed in class and its application to a "real-life" issue. More details will be given on the day each is assigned (see dates below).

30% = *Two Essays.*

For each longer essay (roughly 4-5 double-spaced pages) students are to explain and analyze a particular argument discussed in one of the readings and in class. This will involve giving proper attention to the sub-arguments that the original authors use in support of their premises, offering possible objections, and ultimately providing a defense or critique of the argument in question. Like the out of class assignments, more details will be given on the day the essay is assigned.

20% = *Midterm.*

The midterm exam will cover all of the readings and topics discussed in class up to that point. It will include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay question. All students must take the exam on the day it is held unless prior permission is given by me.

20% = *Final Exam.*

The final exam will cover all of the readings and topics discussed in class after the midterm. It will also include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay question. All students must take the exam on the day it is held unless prior permission is given by me.

10% = *Three-Minute Throwdowns.*

Periodically throughout the course, certain classes will begin with what I will call a "Three-Minute Throwdown". At the start of class students will be asked to write down on a sheet of paper their answers to five quick questions I will ask related to the readings assigned for that date. This should only take about three minutes, and at the end of that three minutes I will collect each student's answers. A student's grade in this category will be calculated based on how many correct answers he or she achieved out of the number of questions asked. The questions from each student's three lowest scoring throwdowns will be dropped. Students will not be told ahead of time which classes will feature these "Throwdowns", so attending class regularly, arriving on time, and consistently having the assigned readings read for the dates they are due will be essential to one's success in this aspect of the course.

5% = *Attendance*.

> Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class (unless a "Throwdown" take its place, should there be one for that day). Each student begins the semester with a perfect score in the attendance category and is allowed to miss up to three classes without any penalty. After three unexcused absences, a point will be deducted per day missed. Notice also that continued unexcused absences hurt not only one's grade in the attendance category, but could also do some damage in the "Throwdown" category as well, should he or she miss the days in which those are held.

Grading:

> Although Out-of-Class assignments, essays, exams and "Throwdowns" will be weighted differently (based on figures above), each particular assignment will be graded on a one-hundred point scale as follows:

A = 100 – 93	**C+ =** 79 – 77
A- = 92 – 90	**C =** 76 – 73
B+ = 89 – 87	**C- =** 72 – 70
B = 86 – 83	**D =** 69 – 60
B- = 82 – 80	**F =** <60

> *Note on late assignments:* Out-of-class assignments and essays are due *in hard copy* at the end of class on the dates listed below, barring any adjustments in the schedule by me. In any event, students will have at least three weeks from the date they are assigned to complete their papers. Any papers not received by the end of class on the date they are due will receive a **TEN POINT deduction** (based on the assignment's 100-point scale) **PER DAY**. No assignments will be accepted more than five days after they are due.

Additional Notes and Policies:

> *Cheating/ Plagiarism.* Academic honesty and integrity are vital for your success as a student and my effectiveness as an instructor. As a result, copying, cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise presenting work as your own that was in fact received from another source will not be tolerated. Any confirmed instance of cheating or plagiarizing will be met with *at the very least* a failing grade on that assignment. As per university policy, penalties could be as grave as a failing grade in the entire course, academic probation or even dismissal from the university. Please take this issue very seriously.

> *Special Needs.* Any student who has a learning or physical disability documented by the university's office of Student Disability Services is encouraged to let me know as soon as possible. I will be happy to make the appropriate accommodations for those that require them.

[Tentative] Schedule for Readings and Assignments:

January 14: **What is Philosophy? Entrance Survey, Class Introductions and Syllabus Overview**

January 16: **General Rules for Arguments** [Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Introduction, Ch. 1-3 (pp. xi-xiv, 1-22)]

January 18: **More Specific Rules for Arguments** [Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Ch. 5-7 (pp. 31-59)]

January 21: **NO CLASS** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

January 23: **Arguments in Essays and Fallacies** [Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Ch. 8, Appendix I (pp. 59-65, 73-80)]

January 25: **Remaining Issues from Weston and an Introduction to Socrates**

January 28: **The Euthyphro Dilemma** [Plato, "Euthyphro" (pp. 1-20 in *Five Dialogues*)]

January 30: **The Trial of Socrates and his Defense** [Plato, "Apology" (pp. 21-45)]

February 1: *Same topic continued*

February 4: **Socrates' Argument for Staying** [Plato, "Crito", (pp. 45-57)]

February 6: *Same topic continued*, First Essay Assigned

February 8: **Socrates on the Soul** [Plato, "Phaedo", (pp. 93-122)]

February 11: *Same topic continued* ["Phaedo", (pp. 122-154)]

February 13: **NO CLASS** (Ash Wednesday)

February 15: **Plato's Republic: What is Justice?** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (pp. 1-35 in Hackett edition)]

February 18: *Same topic continued*, First OCA Assigned

February 20: **Plato's Republic: The Ring of Gyges** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 2, 357a-369b (pp. 36-65)]

February 22: *Same topic continued*

February 25: **Plato's Republic: Structure of the City, Parts of the Soul** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 4, 427d-445e (pp. 103-135)]

February 27: *Same topic continued,* **FIRST ESSAY DUE**

March 1: **Plato's Divided Line and the Allegory of the Cave** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 6, 507b-511e, Book 7, 514a-521d (pp. 180-193)]

March 4: *Same topic continued*

March 6: **First-Half Summary, Review for Midterm**

March 8: **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 11: **NO CLASS** (Spring Break)

March 13: **NO CLASS** (Spring Break)

March 15: **NO CLASS** (Spring Break)

March 18: **Summary and Conclusion of Plato's Republic** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 8, Book 9 (pp. 238-296)]

March 20: *Same topic continued*, **FIRST OCA DUE**

March 22: **Introducing Aristotle** [*Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Pts. 1-2, 6 (pp. 689-693, 700-702 in Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941)) Available on SLU Global]

March 25: **Aristotle on the Soul: Form, Matter, and Substance** [*Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2, Pts. 1-3 (pp. 554-560 in *Basic Works*) Available on SLU Global]

March 27: *Same topic continued*

March 29: **NO CLASS** (Good Friday)

April 1: **NO CLASS** (Easter Monday)

April 3: **Aristotle's Function Argument** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1 (pp. 1-18 in Hackett edition)]

April 5: *Same topic continued*, Second Essay Assigned

April 8: **Aristotle on Virtue and Character** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2 (pp. 18-30)]

April 10: *Same topic continued*

April 12: **Aristotle on Individual Virtues** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Ch. 6-12, Book 4 (pp. 40-66)], Second OCA Assigned

April 15: **Aristotle on Friendship** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII (pp. 119-130)]

April 17: **Aristotle on Pleasure and Contemplation** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X (pp. 153-167)]

April 19: *Same topic continued*, **Summary of Aristotle**

April 22: **Free Will, Determinism, and God: Augustine** [*St. Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Book 3, Ch 1-4 (pp. 70-78 in Thomas Williams (translator and editor) (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993) Available on SLU Global]

April 24: **Free Will, Determinism and God: Boethius** [*Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 5 (pp. 97-114 in P.G. Walsh (translator) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) Available on SLU Global]

April 26: *Same topic continued*, **SECOND ESSAY DUE**

April 29: **Arguments for the Existence of God: Anselm** [*St. Anselm, *Proslogion*, Ch. 2-5, "On behalf of the Fool" (Gaunilo), "Reply to Gaunilo" (pp. 87-88, 105-122 in Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (translators and editors,)*The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) Available on SLU Global]

May 1: **Arguments for the Existence of God: Aquinas** [*St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q.2, a.1-3 (Available at http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1002.htm)]

May 3: *Same topic continued*, **SECOND OCA DUE**

May 6: **Conclusion: Second-Half Summary, Review for Final Exam, Exit Survey, Teaching Evaluations**

TBA: **FINAL EXAM**