

PHIL 105-18: Introduction to Philosophy

Lecture Hours: MWF 11 – 11:50, Davis-Shaughnessy Hall 271

Office Hours: MW 12-1, 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:

August 27: **What is Philosophy? Entrance Survey, Class Introductions and Syllabus Overview**

August 29: **General Rules for Arguments** [Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Introduction, Ch. 1-3 (pp. xi-xiv, 1-22)]

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

September 3: **NO CLASS** (Labor Day)

September 5: **Arguments in Essays and Fallacies** [Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Ch. 8, Appendix I (pp. 59-65, 73-80)]

September 7: **Remaining Issues from Weston and an Introduction to Socrates**

September 10: **The Euthyphro Dilemma** [Plato, "Euthyphro" (pp. 1-20 in Hackett edition)]

September 12: **The Trial of Socrates and his Defense** [Plato, "Apology" (pp. 21-45)]

September 14: **Socrates' Argument for Staying** [Plato, "Crito", (pp. 45-57)]

September 17: *Same topic continued, First Essay Assigned*

September 19: **Socrates on the Soul** [Plato, "Phaedo", (pp. 93-115)]

September 21: *Same topic continued* ["Phaedo", (pp. 115-133)]

September 24: *Same topic continued* ["Phaedo", (pp. 133-154)]

September 26: **Plato on Knowledge and Relativism** [*Plato, "Theaetetus", (pp. 157-179 in *Complete Works*) Available on SLU Global]

September 28: *Same topic continued* ["Theaetetus" (pp. 179-191, 196-207)], First OCA Assigned

October 1: **Plato's Republic: What is Justice?** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (pp. 1-32 in Hackett edition)]

October 3: *Same topic continued*

October 5: **Plato's Republic: The Ring of Gyges** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 2, 357a-369b (pp. 32-44)]

October 8: **Plato's Republic: Structure of the City, Parts of the Soul** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 4, 427d-445e (pp. 102-120)]

October 10: *Same topic continued, FIRST ESSAY DUE*

October 12: **Plato's Divided Line and the Allegory of the Cave** [Plato, *Republic*, Book 6, 507b-511e, Book 7, 514a-521d (pp. 180-193)]

October 15: *Same topic continued*

October 17: **First-Half Summary, Review for Midterm**

October 19: **MIDTERM EXAM**

October 22: **NO CLASS** (Fall Break)

October 24: **Introducing Aristotle** [*Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Pts. 1-2, 6 (available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html>)]

October 26: **Aristotle's Categories, Substances, and Causes** [*Aristotle, *Categories*, Section 1, Pts. 2-5 (available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/categories.1.1.html>); *Physics*, Book 2, Pts. 3-7 (available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/physics.2.ii.html>)]

October 29: **Aristotle on the Soul: Form, Matter, and more on Substance** [*Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2, Pts. 1-2 (available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.2.ii.html>)]

October 31: *Same topic continued*, FIRST OCA DUE

November 2: **Aristotle's Function Argument** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1 (pp. 1-18 in Hackett edition)]

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

November 7: **Aristotle on Virtue and Character** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2 (pp. 18-30)]

November 9: *Same topic continued*

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

November 14: *Same topic continued*, Second OCA Assigned

November 16: **Aristotle on Pleasure and Contemplation** [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10 (pp. 153-167)]

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

November 21: **NO CLASS** (Thanksgiving Break)

November 23: **NO CLASS** (Thanksgiving Break)

November 26: Free Will, Determinism, and God: Augustine [*St. Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Book 3, Ch 1-4 (pp. 70-78 in Hackett edition) *Available on SLU Global*]

November 28: Free Will, Determinism and God: Boethius [*Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 5 (pp. 97-114 in Oxford World Classics edition) *Available on SLU Global*]

November 30: Same topic continued, SECOND ESSAY DUE

December 3: 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 Oxford World Classics edition) *Available on SLU Global*]

December 5: 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>)]

December 7: Same topic continued, SECOND OCA DUE

December 10: Conclusion: Second-Half Summary, Review for Final Exam, Exit Survey, Teaching Evaluations

TBA: FINAL EXAM