

Fall Syllabus 2016: Phil Life 1213.033

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Introduction

A primary objective of this course is to teach students how to construct good arguments and how to assess the arguments of others. In order to accomplish this goal, during the first part of the semester we will read about and discuss what makes a particular argument good or bad and practice constructing good arguments. In addition, we will discuss knowledge and scientific inquiry as this will help us to understand the importance of methodological thought and speech. A second objective is to provide an introduction to ethics. We will read and discuss a variety of ethical theories and apply these theories to one of the most divisive moral issues in the United States (and elsewhere): the morality of abortion. We will be looking at this issue from the two prominent moral theories as well as one which has been regaining prominence after multiple centuries of neglect. Significantly, when we discuss ethics, we will apply what we learned about argumentation during the first part of the semester.

Textbooks:
Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology, 5th Edition, Steven M. Cahn, Editor, Oxford University Press: 2015
Other Readings
(In addition, throughout the semester I may post other required readings on Brightspace that are not in the textbook.)

Evaluated Activities	
A = 360 and above	F = 239 and below
B = 320 -359	
C = 280 - 319	
D = 240 -279	

Four primary factors will go into determining your grade:

Weeklies	100 points
Term Paper 1	40 points
Term Paper 2	60 points
Examination One	100 points
Final Examination	100 points
Total	400 points

Weeklies

Each week on Wednesday (except Aug. 19th, August 26th, Oct 14th, Nov 25th, Dec 2nd, Dec 9th) a short weekly will be due, (just the front and back of a 3x5 note card). Weeklies will be based on the assigned readings and/or the discussion from the previous class. Each weekly is worth 7 points (maximum), and I will assign a total of 11 weeklies. I will drop the three lowest scored weeklies. Since I include in your total paper grade 11 weeklies at 10 points per weekly, the total points possible on weeklies is 110. If you should earn more than one hundred points on weeklies, all additional points count as extra credit. Finally, since the weekly is due at the beginning of class, arriving to class on time is essential. I will not accept the weekly after 5 minutes from the start of class. If you arrive late or are absent, you receive a zero for the weekly. I do give partial credit for weeklies, and just putting your name on the top is worth one point. (It would be best if you purchase a set of 3x5 note cards to right your weekly on.) The purpose of these weeklies is to help me assess how effectively I am going over the material. As such, what I am looking for is a short/ concise exposition of either the reading or of the discussion from the week before. I will let you know which when I assign the weekly on the Monday prior.

Papers

You will be required to write two term papers, which must be type-written, and double-spaced. These are NOT research papers. The purpose for the first is to give you an idea of what I will be looking for in the second. Therefore, the first will only be 2 - 3 pages in length while the second will be longer, but no more than 6 pages. I will post a number of essay topics 2 - 3 weeks before the due date of the first paper and 3 - 4 weeks before the due date of the final.

Each student must choose ONE to which s/he will respond. If you wish to write a paper on a topic other than one of those suggested by me contact me after class and we can make an appointment during my office hours to discuss other topics. (I will be more than happy to approve relevant topics.) The papers you write are not opinion papers. It is standard practice among philosophers to view mere opinion to be worth less than the energy used to express it. What is worthwhile is a reasoned defense of one's opinion. Your paper should be written so as to present rational argument for the position which you hold.

Your paper should consist of two distinct parts. The first part, which should account for approximately half the length of the paper, should be a short explication of the essay you have chosen. This part should contain a statement of the author's position, a statement of your own position (tell me whether you agree or disagree with the author) and an explanation of the author's supporting arguments. The second half of the paper should consist of your own evaluation or critique of the essay. In this part of the paper you should tell me WHY you agree or disagree with the author. If you agree with the author you should tell me what argument(s) are convincing. Then tell me what argument(s) might be proffered by one who disagrees with the author and how the author might respond. If you disagree with the author, you should provide criticism of the author's essay and attempt to explain how the author might respond to the criticism.

Hence, whether you agree or disagree with the author, you should provide arguments against the author and responses thereto. Finally, you should explain why you believe your position is the best position. You must NOT use outside sources for this essay. I will provide a more detailed account in class.

Examinations

Each of the scheduled examinations will cover lectures, discussions and assigned readings from the classes that precede it. You are responsible for assigned readings without regard to whether they were covered in class. The final examination will focus primarily on the lectures, discussions and readings subsequent to the first examination,

but it may cover material from the whole semester. I generally do not give makeup examinations. I believe that doing so penalizes those who diligently prepare for class.

There are several conditions, however, under which I will consider a make-up:

1. A student is sick during the exam, calls me before the exam, and provides me with a doctor's note certifying that s/he was sick;
2. A major tragedy, like a death in the student's family, which somehow denies the student the opportunity to prepare for or attend the examination;
3. The student has a conflicting university obligation (s/he should know about this well in advance of the examination and provide me with documentation); or
4. Some other reason, which we deem to be a justifiable cause for non-attendance.

Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

Academic dishonesty and/or misconduct will not be condoned or tolerated. Any evidence of such will be dealt with by a severe penalty in accordance with OSU policy.

Academic Integrity Statement

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, academicintegrity.okstate.edu.

Special Accommodations for Students

If any member of this class feels that s/he has a qualified disability and needs special accommodations, s/he should notify me and request verification of eligibility for accommodations from the Office of Student Disability Services. Please advise me of such disability and the desired accommodations at some point before, during, or immediately after the first scheduled class period.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

I do not intend to lecture. Rather, I expect a constructive interaction between myself and the class in order to foster an enlightening discussion.

See OSU Syllabus Attachment for further information.

Fall 2016 Reading Assignments		
Due		Readings
Aug 15	Introduction and Organizational Stuff	
Aug 17	What is Philosophy?	3 - 12
Aug 19	Defense of Socrates	17 - 22
Aug 22	The Defense of Socrates	22 - 33
Aug 24	The Defense of Socrates	33 - 37
Aug 26	Improving your Thinking/Necessary and Sufficient Conditions	52 - 59
Aug 29	The Scope of Logic	45 - 51
Aug 31	Discussion	Brightspace
Sep 2	Meditations of First Philosophy	110 - 113
Sep 5	University Holiday	
Sep 7	Scientific Inquiry	73 - 79
Sep 9	The Problem of Induction	103 - 105
Sep 12	Induction without a Problem	105 - 107
Sep 14	Caring and Epistemic Demands	85 - 88
Sep 16	What is Knowledge	88 - 90
Sep 19	Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?	90 - 91
Sep 21	An Essay Concerning Human Understanding	367 - 370
Sep 23	A Treatise of Human Nature	370 - 375
Sep 26	The Crito	602 - 607
Sep 28	Review	615 - 618
Sep 30	Test 1	619 - 623
Oct 3	The Problem of Personal Identity	343 - 345
Oct 5	The Unimportance of Personal Identity Paper 1 Due (NO Weekly)	345 - 349
Oct 7	The Republic	650 - 668
Oct 10	Democracy	543 - 547
Oct 12	Cultivating Humanity	568 - 571
Oct 14	(Fall Break, classes recesses)	
Oct 17	Leviathan	669 - 675
Oct. 19	Second Treatise of Government	676 - 679
Oct. 21	A Theory of Justice	631 - 635
Oct. 24	Distributive Justice	635 - 639
Oct. 26	Fall Break	
Oct. 28	Utilitarianism	438 - 445
Oct 31	A Critique of Utilitarianism	Brightspace
Nov 2	Groundwork of the Metaphysics of morals	433 - 437
Nov 4	A Supreme Moral Principle?	409 - 414
Nov 7	Nicomachean Ethics	428 - 433
Nov. 9	Virtue Ethics	414 - 416
Nov. 11	TBD	417 - 421
Nov. 14	The Ethics of Care	417 - 421
Nov. 16	The Ethics of Care and (Capital?) Punishment	Brightspace
Nov. 18	On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion	458 - 471
Nov. 21	A Defense of Abortion	449 - 458

Nov. 23	Why Abortion is Immoral	472 - 478
Nov. 25	Virtue Theory and Abortion (Term Paper Due)	478 - 487
Nov. 28	Review	
Nov. 30	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec 2	Pre-Finals Week	
Dec 5	Finals	
Dec. 7	Finals	
Dec. 9	Finals	
Dec. 12	Finals	
Dec. 14	Final Exams	

Fall 2016 Academic Calendar

August 1 - 12	Fall pre-session
Friday, August 12	Late enrollment fee assessed
Monday, August 15	Main Fall Semester Begins
Monday, August 22	Last Day to Enroll (nonrestrictive) 100 percent Refund
Friday, August 26	Restrictive Drop/Add Deadline, Partial Refund
Monday, September 5	University Holiday, Offices Closed
Tuesday, September 27	Six Week (mid-term) grades due from faculty
Friday, October 14	Fall break, classes recessed
Tuesday, November 1	Deadline to file graduation application (for name to appear in fall commencement program)
Friday, November 4	W drop/withdraw deadline
Friday, November 18	W/F withdraw deadline
Wednesday-Friday, November 23-25	Thanksgiving break, classes recessed
Monday-Friday, November 28-December 2	Pre-finals week
Friday, December 2	Fall classes end
Monday-Friday, December 5-9	Final exams
Friday and Saturday, December 9 and 10	Fall Commencement Ceremonies
Tuesday, December 13	Final grades due electronically from faculty

Drop/Add and Withdraw Deadline Details:

- 100% Refund, Nonrestrictive Drop/Add Deadline:
 - add a course (nonrestrictive)
 - drop a course with 100% refund and no grade
- Partial Refund, Restrictive Drop/Add Deadline:
 - add a course (requires drop/add card with instructor and advisor signatures)
 - drop a course with partial refund and grade of "W"
- W Drop/Withdraw Deadline:

- drop a course with automatic grade of "W"
 - withdraw from all classes with automatic grades of "W" (requires completed Withdrawal Form)
- W/F Withdraw Deadline:
 - withdraw from all courses with assigned grades of "W" or "F" (requires completed Withdrawal Form)