

Introduction to Philosophy: Self and Reality

General Information

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| <i>Instructor</i> | Jonathan D. Jacobs Office: Adorjan – 205 Office Number: 977-7172 Email: jonathandjacobs@gmail.com Office Hours: T, Th, 11:00-12:00, and by appointment |
| <i>Location</i> | Morrissey Hall 3400, 12:00-12:50, M/W |
| <i>Texts</i> | Plato, <i>Five Dialogues</i> ; Plato, <i>The Republic</i> ; Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , other texts distributed in class |

Course Purpose

Course Description

What is philosophy? What is its value, and why might you want to live a philosophical life? How, in general, should we live? What is it to live an excellent, flourishing, human life? What it is to be a *good* human person, a *just* human person, and to live good and just lives? What is the relationship between justice and happiness? What role do friends play, if any, in the good and just life? These and other questions will occupy our minds in this course. And our primary window into these topics will be the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle.

Goals

My goals are that as a result of taking this course, you will:

1. Become a better critical thinker (in reading, writing and conversation);
 2. Understand key philosophical concepts within the context of ancient Greek philosophy; and
 3. Understand and value the place of critical and philosophical thinking in the broader context of our whole intellectual and spiritual life
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Expectations

You can expect that I will:

- 1) Treat you with respect, as adults capable of high achievement and desiring to be challenged;
- 2) Make clear precisely how to succeed and accomplish goals in this course;
- 3) Be available to you for discussion and consultation outside of class on a regular basis;
- 4) Assign grades on the basis of academic achievement and nothing else;
- 5) Return graded assignments with helpful feedback in a timely manner and update you on your progress throughout the term;
- 6) Manage the class in a professional manner—start and end on time, prepare carefully for each class, keep records carefully and confidentially, and so on.

I expect that you will:

- 1) Conduct yourself in an appropriate manner—treat me and your fellow students with respect,

- show up on time, do not leave or pack up early, and so on;
- 2) Attend every class (except in extraordinary circumstances);
- 3) Prepare to the best of your ability before class;
- 4) Participate fully during class;
- 5) Do your own work (unless explicitly instructed otherwise), and in general conduct yourself in honest manner;
- 6) Take initiative to make up missed classes and work by getting notes from a classmate, reviewing them, and following up with any remaining questions in office hours.

Course Assessments and Grade

I will ask a lot of you, but I will not ask you to do pointless busy work. Instead, I will challenge you—and help you!—accomplish worthwhile goals. Our activities are designed to accomplish (and show that we have accomplished) those goals. The following are our course assessments:

Essays 1, 2, and 3 (50% total)

There will be 3 essays. The first will be worth 10% of your final grade, the second, 15%, and the third, 25%.

Philosophy as a Way of Life Project

You have the option to drop the second essay in exchange for participation in the Philosophy as a Way of Life Project. (More about this soon.)

Argument Evaluation and Repair (25%)

I will ask you to write 3 short (1 to 2 page) argument evaluation throughout the term. The first will be worth 5% of your grade. The second and third will each be worth 10% of your grade.

Quizzes (15%)

There will be a quiz each week covering the reading material for that week. Your average on all the quizzes will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Discussion Board Posts (10%)

You will be asked to post a weekly reflection on a Blackboard discussion board. Your average score on all the posts will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Final Grade

You must complete the first and third essays, either essay two or the Philosophy as a Way of Life project, and the three argument evaluations in order to pass the course.

There will be no curve, because this is not a competition but a collaborative effort. If everyone accomplishes great things in the course, everyone will get an A. The course grade depends on the grades earned for course activities, and will be determined roughly by the following chart:

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| 93-100% | A | 83-86.99% | B | 73-76.99% | C | 63-66.99% | D |
| 90-92.99% | A- | 80-82.99% | B- | 70-72.99% | C- | 60-62.99% | D- |
| 87-89.99% | B+ | 77-79.99% | C+ | 67-69.99% | D+ | below 60% | F |

I reserve the right to deviate from this assignment of grades if I think the final grades do not reflect accurately how you performed in the course.

Policies and Guidelines

All policies and guidelines in this syllabus are subject to change at my discretion. I will communicate any such changes to you both in class and by email.

Office Hours

You do not need an appointment to come in during office hours. Please just drop on by to ask questions, clarify lecture or readings, or just to chat. In addition to the posted office hours, you can make an appointment with me. (Just email me or talk with me before or after class to set it up.) Outside of office hours, you can always stop by my office, but while I will try to be there and available, I can't guarantee that I will be able to meet with you. It never hurts to try, but I may ask to schedule a meeting at another time. You can of course always contact me by email.

Official Communications

I will from time to time wish to communicate with you outside of class hours with important class related information. I will use your school-supplied email. Because these communications are important, I expect that you will check (and read!) your email at least once a day, Monday through Friday.

Email

The best way to reach me is by email. I will do my best to respond to emails in a timely manner—usually within 24 hours—but I will probably not answer emails between 5pm and 9am and on weekends. I am much more likely to answer emails during weekdays.

Please remember that email communications are a type of formal communication. You should always feel free to email me, but you should not treat an email to me like texting. As is the case with any formal communication, your email should contain a greeting—like “Dear Professor Jacobs,” or “Jon,”—a fully explained description of what you are trying to inform me of or ask me about, an ending with at least your first and last name, and an informative subject line. I'm not asking you to be overly formal, but simply to observe some commonly expected norms of communication. As you no doubt already know, this is how formal communication—in academics and in “the real world”—works.

Make-up Quizzes and Discussion Board Posts

Make-up quizzes and discussion board posts will not be allowed.

Extensions for argument evaluations and essays

I understand that sometimes, despite our best efforts, things don't go according to plan. The printer breaks, you get a cold, the idea didn't work out and you had to go back to the drawing board. If you need an extension for any reason, I will automatically grant one for three days (72 hours). You must email me and your TA by midnight the day before it is due. If you email before then and ask for the extension, I will grant it. You do not need to specify the reason you are asking for the extension. If you need an extension for more than three days, your situation is likely serious enough that you should be in contact with the Office of the Dean or the Student Health Center. In such cases, I will be happy to be in contact with those offices to arrange a schedule for you to complete your work.

If an extension is granted but you do not turn in the paper after three days, the penalty will be 10% for

each 24 hours after the deadline.

Attendance

Attendance, and full preparation and participation, is expected at each class session.

Extra Credit

There will be no opportunities for “extra credit” to improve grades that have already been earned. Bargaining for grades (“I need a B because...”) is not acceptable. The only ways to achieve the grade that you need are to do well on the quizzes and discussion boards and to write excellent essays and argument evaluations.

Electronic Devices

No use of electronics devices is normally permitted. This includes cell phones, tablets, computers—anything with an on/off switch or battery. If you believe your educational experience would be improved by the use of an electronic device, or if you have a special need some day, please talk with me about it and I will work with you.

Academic Integrity Policy

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source (including the internet), taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

A violation of the Academic Integrity and Honesty policy will be dealt with according to policies of the College of Arts and Sciences. Sanctions may include a 0 on the assignment and a lowering of the course grade (including to an F). Reports will be filed with the Dean of the College and the Academic Affairs Committee. The College or the University may impose sanctions, including, but not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

For more information, please see: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

Withdrawals and Incompletes

Withdraws and incompletes will be given only in accordance with University policy. In particular, you should note that an incomplete is given only in extraordinary circumstances.

Support and Services

The University offers many services to all students, including those with special needs. I encourage you to talk with me about any special needs you may have, and in addition to take advantage of University wide support. Here are some of the services that the University provides:

Disability Services

If you believe that, due to a disability, you could benefit from academic accommodations, you are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or to visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. I am happy to support student accommodation requests when I receive an approved letter from Disability Services and when you discuss these accommodations with me after I receive the approved letter.

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Cross Cultural Center

In support of Saint Louis University's Jesuit mission, the Cross Cultural Center (CCC) maintains an inclusive environment of mutual respect for people of all backgrounds, cultures and identities. It is our mission to promote multicultural awareness and education, provide support services to historically underrepresented and marginalized student populations and develop students into critically reflective and socially just leaders within society. Our efforts are grounded in cultivating knowledge and engagement through intentional collaborations, experiences, initiatives, and programs.

The Center is located in Center for Global Citizenship, Ste. 134, and you can email them at CCC@slu.edu or call them at (314) 977-2119. For more information, please visit: <http://www.slu.edu/cross-cultural-center>

University Counseling Center

“Mental health services are available to all Saint Louis University students, including full-time, part-time, graduate, law, and medical students. We provide a broad range of services to the Saint Louis University community, including individual and couples counseling, educational and therapy groups, psychiatry, outreach and programming, and consultation to groups, departments, and organizations.”

For more information, please visit: <http://www.slu.edu/university-counseling-center>

For Mental Health Emergencies, a trained and licensed staff therapist is on call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year at 314-977-TALK (8255).

Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of

misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> www.slu.edu/here4you .

Important Dates

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| Mon, Feb 5 | Argument Evaluation 1 Due |
| Mon, Feb 26 | Essay 1 Due |
| Mon, Mar 12 | No class: Spring Break |
| Wed, Mar 14 | No class: Spring Break |
| Mon, Mar 19 | Optional Way of Life Project Begins |
| Fri, Mar 23 | Argument Evaluation 2 Due |
| Fri, Mar 30 | Optional Way of Life Project Ends |
| Mon, Apr 2 | No class: Easter Break |
| Fri, Apr 6 | Essay 2/WOL Reflection Due |
| Mon, Apr 23 | Argument Evaluation 3 Due |
| Mon, May 7 | Last Class |
| Thu, May 10 | Essay 3 Due |