
PHIL 110.001 – Introduction to Philosophy: Great Works

UNC Chapel Hill | Spring 2018

MWF 9:05AM – 9:55AM, Caldwell 105

Instructor: Alfredo Watkins, watkins6@live.unc.edu

Office Hours: Monday: 8AM-9AM (Caldwell 210D)

Wednesday: 10AM-11AM (Caldwell 210D)

Friday: (Group Study) 12:30PM – 1:30PM (Alpine Bagel in Carolina Union)

Course Description: This course is an introduction to philosophy via some of the most important books in the Western philosophical canon, spanning nearly 2400 years from the 5th century B.C. to the 19th century A.D. Authors will include Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Marx, Mill and Kant. Topics covered will include: God and morality, the soul, knowledge of the external world, the existence of God, communism and capitalism, political authority, democracy, the nature of morality, and free will. (No prerequisites required.)

Warning: This course will be **very heavily reading-based**. (See the reading schedule below for details.) While the exact amount of pages per week varies, some readings are denser than others, and understanding philosophical texts often requires you to read them multiple times. (To help you with this, I have designated some pages as “**Focus**” sections, where some of the main ideas come up and it will help you to read especially closely. However, you will be tested on the whole reading, and must read **all assigned pages**.) In general, you should expect to spend about 5 - 6 uninterrupted hours per week on the reading alone. If you are not able to make this commitment, you should not take the course.

Course Goals:

1. You will gain a broad knowledge of the ideas of Western philosophy, and learn some of the most influential concepts to have shaped human history. More importantly, you will also grapple on a personal level with some of the deepest questions of human existence.
2. You will learn to **read**: Unlike other classes you may take, in this class we will generally read **entire books** written by the authors we will cover. This will teach you how to extract the main ideas out of what are sometimes dense and unfamiliar texts. In doing so, you will learn how to interpret primary sources, and thereby learn how to think *for yourself* by engaging with authors *directly* (as opposed to *other peoples' summaries* of those authors, which are sometimes mixed with biases, oversimplifications, etc.).
3. You will learn to **write**: A good philosophy paper is clear, easy to follow, and straight to the point. Thus, in this class, you will learn to phrase your ideas as clearly as possible, structure your paper coherently, and avoid unnecessarily complicated and confusing language. This will be very helpful for you in the future.
4. Most importantly, you will learn to **think**: You will learn how to raise questions about views you are unfamiliar with or disagree with. You will also be confronted with

challenging and interesting questions that require you to think critically about your *own* views and argue rigorously for those views based on *reasons* and *evidence*. Finally, you will be taught how to communicate those views clearly and persuasively to others.

This class is not just for philosophy students; being able to **read, write, speak** and **think logically** and *clearly* are skills that transfer to almost any part of life and any academic field. (That is why philosophy majors are among the very highest scorers on the LSAT, GRE, GMAT, and in med-school admissions.) If you put in the effort, then by the end of this class you'll be a beast.

Textbooks and Readings: The following textbooks are **required** and can be found in the campus bookstore or cheap on Amazon (you must have these specific editions/translations):

- [Plato](#): Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo (Hackett Classics) ISBN: 978-0872206335
- [Descartes](#): Meditations, Objections, and Replies (Hackett) Translated by Roger Ariew ISBN: 978-0872207981
- [Locke](#): Two Treatises of Government (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought) 3rd Edition ISBN: 978-0521357302
- [Hume](#): Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (Hackett) 2nd Edition ISBN: 978-0872204027
- [Kant](#): Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: with On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns (Hackett) 3rd Edition ISBN: 978-0872201668

The following is **highly recommended**; I will be using this version and referring to it in class:

- [Mill](#): Utilitarianism (Hackett) 2nd Edition Edited by George Sher ISBN: 978-0872206052

The rest of the readings will be available online on Sakai. (Go to the class in Sakai then go to Resources>>Course Readings.) If you choose to use the electronic versions I put up then I highly recommend you print them so you can have a physical copy to read, highlight, take notes, etc.

Classroom Policies:

1. **No laptops or electronics of any sort** (*except* during in-class exams, which are explained below, or if you have official accommodation from Disability Services). If you break this rule, I will call you out and **you will lose 2% of your total course grade**.
2. If you have a question or comment, raise your hand. Please be courteous and do not interrupt someone else who is speaking. If you want to raise a point directly in response to a comment another classmate has just made, hold up your index finger and I'll call on you either next or soon after.
3. In general, please exercise basic decency and respect toward your classmates.

Attendance: Attendance is required and will be taken daily. However, students have exactly five (5) “free” absences, which you can use whenever you like. (You do not need to let me know when or why you were/are/will be absent.) However, if you have **more than 5 absences**, you will **automatically lose 8% of your entire grade**. If you have **more than 7 absences**, you will automatically lose **15% of your grade**. (See participation breakdown below.) So use your absences wisely – I highly recommend you save them for an emergency or illness.

Grade Breakdown:

- **Participation:** 15%
- **Pop Quizzes:** 15%
- **Paper 1:** 10% [2 pages; due via Dropbox on 2/6 at 11:59PM]
- **Exam 1:** 10% [In class, 2/16]
- **Paper 2 :** 15% [3-4 pages; due via Dropbox on 3/9 at 11:59PM]
- **Exam 2:** 15% [In class, 3/28]
- **Argument Extraction:** 5% [1 page; printed copy due in class on 4/20]
- **Final Paper:** 15% [4-6 pages; printed copy due in class on 5/7 at 8AM]

Participation Breakdown: Participation in class is a huge part of your grade, so it is very important that you actively participate. This means attending class regularly, having done the readings for the day, and joining in the discussion (for example, by raising a question, or making a point about the issue we’re discussing, responding to another student, etc.).

The policy for participation is very simple, and if you keep track of yourself you can calculate it precisely. All you have to do is keep track of which dates you participated and your absences.

There are only four possible participation grades: A+, C+, F+, and F-, computed as follows:

- A+ (100%):
 1. Student **participated well** at least 10 times (i.e., *during at least 10 sessions*); AND
 2. Student did not miss more than 5 sessions.
- C+ (77%):
 1. Student participated well 5-9 times; AND
 2. Student did not miss more than 5 sessions.
- F+ (50%):
 1. Student participated well 1-4 times; AND/OR
 2. Student missed 5-7 sessions.
- F- (0%):
 1. Student participated well 0 times; AND/OR
 2. Student missed more than 7 sessions.

Note that I say **you must participate well**: You must raise questions or comments that show you have done the reading and are actively engaging with the problem we are discussing. (I *do* track participation after every session, by check-marking on my roster those who have participated.)

Pop Quizzes: There will be 16 pop quizzes throughout the semester (you are allowed **one “freebie”**; so if you miss one, you can still get 100% on the pop quizzes portion of the grade, and if you get all of them you will get extra credit). They will be given at a random time during lecture (**not necessarily at the beginning of class**). They will be multiple choice, and will be based on the readings of the day. They will be straightforward questions that you should have no problem answering **so long as you do all the reading**.

Exams: You will have two (2) in-class exams that will involve some multiple choice and some short answer questions. You will be allowed to either use a bluebook or your laptop (though both exams will be closed-book and closed-note). Details of the exams and study guides will be given as we get closer to the exam. **Please include only your PID and no names.**

Papers: Please read the following closely:

- Instructions for the papers will be passed out in class on the days indicated on the reading schedule below. The due dates are also indicated on the reading schedule.
- So as to make grading as fair as possible, grading will be blind. Thus, **no names are allowed on your papers; please include only your PID.**
- In general, **late papers** will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every day (or part of a day) after they are due. However, you are allowed **one (1) “free” late day**, where you can turn a paper in up to 24 hours after the time it is due. Which paper you use it on is up to you. If and when you choose to use this, please just let me know via e-mail.
- **You must use citations:** You must cite sources in your papers, especially when you are quoting or attributing a view to an author. Citations serve the purposes of (a) protecting you from allegations of plagiarism (see below), and (b) proving to me that what you attribute to an author is what the author actually says. I don’t care what format you use, so long as I can easily find the place you are referencing. Citations do not count toward the word count. **Failure to cite will result in loss of points.**

Argument Extraction: This will be a very short, one-page assignment that will ask you to state very clearly and succinctly an author’s argument and briefly respond to it. Instructions will be given as we get closer to the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism and Honor Code: The UNC Instrument of Student Governance defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution [**e.g., citations**] in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” Note that it is also unacceptable to re-use your **own work**, including submitting old papers. It is your responsibility to be familiar with university policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty (see, e.g., page 5 [here](#)) and with the [Honor Code](#). It is my responsibility to report any instances of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions about anything on this topic, please come talk to me.

Group Study: Friday office hours will be a “group study” where I will meet with 3-5 students and we can discuss as a group any problems or questions you have. There will be coffee and pastries provided (free!). I will send a sign-up sheet each week for those who want to come.

Reading & Assignment Schedule

(Readings will be covered in lecture on the dates listed. This schedule may change.)

1. Plato: *Republic*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*

- (1/10) Plato's *Republic* (online; 514a-519d, pp. 208-213) – “The Allegory of the Cave”
- (1/12) Plato: *Euthyphro* (pp. 1-20) – God and morality; the Socratic method
- (1/15-1/19) **No class** (Holiday/snow-days)
- (1/22) Plato: *Apology* (pp. 20-44) – “I know I know nothing”; The unexamined life “not worth living”; Why fear death?
- (1/24) Plato: *Crito* (pp. 45-57) – Political authority; Obedience to the law
- (1/26) Plato: *Phaedo* (pp. 93-116) – The Opposites Argument; the Forms; Recollection
- (1/29) Plato: *Phaedo* (pp. 116-129) – The Affinity Argument; Objections
- (1/29) **Paper 1 prompt will be passed out**
- (1/31) Plato: *Phaedo* (pp. 129-154) – Responses; “Form of Life” Argument; the Afterlife

2. Aristotle: *Categories*; Thomas Aquinas: *Principles of Nature*

- (2/2) Aristotle: *Categories* (Chs. 1-5) – Substance & Accident
 Aquinas: *Principles* (Secs. 1-17) – Actuality & Potentiality; Matter & Form
Focus: Sections 1 – 10; 14 – 15; 17
- (2/5) Aquinas: *Principles* (Secs. 18-36) – Causation; The “Four Causes”; Necessity
- (2/6) **PAPER – Paper 1 due** at 11:59PM (via Dropbox on Sakai)
- (2/7) Aquinas: *Principles* (Secs. 37-49) – Per se/Per accidens; Act/Potency; Analogy
- (2/9) Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* – “The Five Ways” for proving God’s existence
- (2/12) Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* – “The Five Ways” (continued)

3. Rene Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*

(2/14) Descartes: *Meditations* (Dedication/Preface/Synopsis; Meditation I) – Seeking certainty; Descartes’ method of doubt; Three Stages of Doubt

Focus: Dedication; Meditation I

(2/16) **EXAM** – In-Class Exam 1

(2/19) Descartes: *Meditations* (II) – “Cogito, ergo sum”; the “Wax Argument”

(2/21) Descartes: *Meditations* (III) – God’s Existence: The “Idea of God” Proof

(2/23) Descartes: *Meditations* (III) – (continued)

(2/26) Descartes: *Meditations* (IV) – Intellect & Will; Truth & Falsehood

(2/28) **Paper 2 prompt will be passed out in class (will be on Sakai on Tuesday 2/27)**

(2/28) Descartes: *Meditations* (V) – God’s Existence Again: The Ontological Argument

(3/2) Descartes: *Meditations* (VI) – The external world; mind vs. body; problem of evil

4. John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government*

(3/5) Locke: *Treatise* (Chs. I - IV) – The State of Nature; Liberty; Slavery

(3/7) Locke: *Treatise* (Ch. V) – Property

(3/9) **PAPER – Paper 2 due** at 11:59PM (via Dropbox on Sakai)

(3/9) Locke: *Treatise* (Chs. VI – VII) – Family; Parents and Children; Civil Society

(3/12 – 3/16) **No class** (Spring break)

(3/19) Locke: *Treatise* (Chs. VIII – X) – Social Contract Theory; Forms of Government

(3/21) Locke: *Treatise* (Chs. XI – XIV) – Separation of Powers

(3/23) Locke: *Treatise* (Chs. XV – XVIII) – Types of Power; Conquest; Tyranny

(3/26) Locke: *Treatise* (Ch. XIX) – Revolution

(3/28) **EXAM** – In-Class Exam 2

5. Karl Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*

(3/30) **No class** (Holiday)

(4/2) Marx: *Communist Manifesto* (Prefaces; Ch. 1) – The history of Capitalism; property

(4/4) Marx: *Communist Manifesto* (Ch. 2) – The workers; social structures; Communism

(4/6) Marx: *Communist Manifesto* (Ch. 3-4) – Forms of socialism; world-wide revolution

6. David Hume: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

(4/9) **“Argument Extraction” assignment will be explained and passed out**

(4/9) Hume: *Dialogues* (Intro, pp. vii-xvii; Parts I-II)

(4/11) Hume: *Dialogues* (Parts III-V)

(4/13) Hume: *Dialogues* (Parts VI-VII)

(4/16) Hume: *Dialogues* (Parts VIII-IX)

(4/18) Hume: *Dialogues* (Parts X-XI)

(4/20) Hume: *Dialogues* (Parts XII)

(4/20) **ASSIGNMENT – Printed “Argument Extraction” assignment due** (in class)

7. John Stuart Mill: *Utilitarianism*

(4/23) Mill: *Utilitarianism* (Chs. 1-2) – Utilitarianism; Goodness as happiness; Pleasure

Focus: Ch. 2

(4/25) Mill: *Utilitarianism* (Ch. 3) – The “Ultimate Sanction” of the Principle of Utility

(4/25) **Final Paper prompt will be passed out**

(4/27) Mill: *Utilitarianism* (Ch. 4) – Proof of the Principle of Utility

(5/7) **FINAL PAPER – Printed final paper due** at 8AM (in class, Caldwell 105)