

PHIL 1010-12
Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2018

M/W/F, 12:00-12:50 PM, CX-101 (Classroom Annex)

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Office Hours: M/W, 10:00-11:00 AM, and 1:00-2:00 PM (and by appointment)

Course website: <http://www.blackboard.csustan.edu>

Course description: “Philosophy” literally translated from the Greek means “love of wisdom.” Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher who epitomized this meaning, famously said that “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Following Socrates’ example, one may describe philosophy as the attempt to live an examined life, in part, by asking questions about what it means to live an examined life. What is the good life? Are there causes worth dying for? When (if ever) is it permissible to disobey the law? Is the soul immortal? These are just a few of the philosophical questions Socrates posed and discussed in Plato’s classic dialogues. In this course, we will join Socrates (and other philosophers) in discussion of these and other questions through careful study of and reflection on four classic texts by Plato, Rene Descartes, John Stuart Mill, and David Hume. While no introductory course can do justice to the great expanse of philosophy, dedicated students can expect to experience what it’s like to engage seriously with the best thinkers and deepest questions of a great intellectual tradition.

Required Texts (available in the bookstore or online):

Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (Hackett Classics, 2nd edition)

ISBN: 978-0-87220-633-5

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition)

ISBN: 978-1107665736

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays* (Oxford Classics, 2nd edition)

ISBN: 978-0-19-967080-2

David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Prometheus Books)

ISBN: 978-0879755270

It is important to acquire the correct editions. This is for two reasons. First, two of the four philosophers we will read did not write in English, so we will rely on translations. Second, we will be referring extensively to page numbers in class and those are often edition specific.

General Education Goals (course specific goals in bold):

Goal 1: Develop the intellectual skills and competencies necessary to participate effectively in society and the world.

Students attaining the first learning goal will be able to:

- **Demonstrate effective oral communication.**
- **Demonstrate effective written communication.**
- **Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively.**
- Apply quantitative reasoning concepts and skills to solve problems.
- Find, understand, examine critically, and use information from various sources.

- Comprehend and use appropriate technological resources effectively.

Goal 2: Develop broad knowledge of biological and physical sciences, humanities and creative arts, and social sciences.

Students attaining the second learning goal will be able to:

- Explain and apply basic scientific methods
- Demonstrate an understanding of the living and non-living physical world
- Recognize the structures and institutions that frame human interactions
- **Express appreciation of cultural, intellectual, and artistic ideas and works**
- Demonstrate effective creative expression and understanding through artistic means
- **Identify life-skills and behaviors needed to flourish as a mature person**

Goal 3: Develop abilities to integrate knowledge, make informed ethical decisions, and accept civic responsibility.

Students attaining the third learning goal will be able to:

- Integrate and combine knowledge and abilities developed in several fields to analyze and critically evaluate specific problems, issues, or topics
- **Illustrate the ability to self-reflect and assess relevant ethical values**
- Identify and analyze problems within local, regional, national, and/or global contexts
- Demonstrate enhanced awareness of multicultural, community, and/or technological perspectives

Assessment:

5% – Course Engagement

You cannot learn if you do not participate and take ownership of your own learning. Because of this, I expect students to miss class rarely and only for good reason. Similarly, I expect you to engage in class discussion, either voluntarily or when called on. I will do what I can to make this not stressful, and I expect you will all earn 5%.

15% – Discussion Day Written Reflections (total of 5)

There will be five “discussion days” interspersed throughout the semester (always on a Friday). Each student will prepare a short piece (one page double-spaced) reflecting on some aspect(s) of readings for that week (e.g. something Socrates said in *Euthyphro* that interested you). They will be due on the discussion day and we will use them as a basis for our conversation.

80% (20% each) – Four in-class written exams

Your success in the course depends largely on your engagement with the reading. As a measure of this, there will be four in-class written exams, one for each thinker we will study. You will receive questions in advance and one will be chosen randomly on exam day for you to write on.

Grading Schema:

A = 95-100%, A- = 90-94%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80-83%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 74-76%, C- = 70-73%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 60-66 %, F = 0-59%

I will, as a matter of policy, round up grades to the next letter grade if you are within 1% (e.g. 79.1 to 80%, but *not* 78.9 to 80%)

Late work policy: As a rule, work will not be accepted late except in cases of documented emergency or illness. You may make a written petition for an exception if you feel you have a compelling reason for turning work in late, but these requests must be made in advance and certainly not near the end of the semester in conjunction with a grade appeal.

Course conduct: You are expected to be respectful toward your fellow students and myself. This course may cover some controversial and emotionally charged issues. If you are not comfortable rationally discussing them in a thoughtful and respectful way, you should not take the course. Additionally, please refrain from using your phones (e.g. texting, email, YouTube videos, listening to music, etc.), and otherwise acting in an inappropriate or distracting way (e.g. chronic lateness, talking, sleeping, playing games, etc.). Responsible use of laptops/tablets is permitted provided it does not degenerate into any of the above. Failure to abide by the above will result in forfeiting the participation portion of the grade and you may be asked to leave class.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a violation of University policy and seriously undermines your integrity as a student. If you are suspected of plagiarizing or cheating, and proven to have done so, you will receive an F in the course and be required to go through standard University policy, which will be unpleasant for both of us. It is your responsibility to understand the University's plagiarism policy. When in doubt, ask me. See: <https://www.csustan.edu/english/policy-plagiarism>

Reasonable Accommodation: Should any student need accommodation because of a disability, please let me know to discuss options. For more information, please visit: <https://www.csustan.edu/hr/ada-accommodations-employees-students>

Subject to change proviso: Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade, late work, and course conduct policy may be subject to change with advanced notice as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Schedule

See below for a comprehensive overview of readings, assignments, and due dates for the semester. Please note that readings and assignments are to be completed *before* the class for which they are listed.

Note on reading: Texts in philosophy can be difficult to read. I have tried to limit the number of pages in the reading assignments to account for this. However, you will still likely need to reread texts (perhaps after the lecture) to understand the material well.

PRELUDE

Week One – *What is Philosophy?*

August 22 (Wed): Syllabus Overview and Introduction to the Course

August 24 (Fri): Introduction to Socrates and Plato, *Five Dialogues*, “Introduction” pp. ix-x

PART ONE – Plato’s *Dialogues*

Week Two – *Euthyphro*

August 27 (Mon): *Five Dialogues*, “Euthyphro”, pp. 1-12 (through 9e)

August 29 (Wed): *Five Dialogues*, “Euthyphro”, pp. 12-20

August 31 (Fri): Discussion Day, First Written Reflections Due

Week Three – *The Apology*

September 3 (Mon): LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

September 5 (Wed): *Five Dialogues*, “Apology”, pp. 21-28 (through 24c)

September 7 (Fri): *Five Dialogues*, “Apology”, pp. 28-39 (through 35d)

Week Four – *Apology cont. and Crito*

September 10 (Mon): *Five Dialogues*, “Apology”, pp. 39-44, “Crito”, pp. 45-48 (through 46a)

September 12 (Wed): *Five Dialogues*, “Crito”, pp. 48-51 (through 48e)

September 14 (Fri): *Five Dialogues*, “Crito”, pp. 51-57

Week Five – *Excerpts from Phaedo*

September 17 (Mon): *Five Dialogues*, “Phaedo” pp. 94-106 (through 68e), 151-154 (begin at 115a)

September 19 (Wed): First in-class exam

September 21 (Fri): NO CLASS

PART TWO – Descartes’ *Meditations*

Week Six – *Meditation One*

September 24 (Mon): Introduction to Descartes, *Meditations*, “Dedicatory Letter/Preface”, pp. 3-11

September 26 (Wed): “First Meditation”, pp. 12-15

September 28 (Fri): Discussion Day, Second Written Reflections Due

Week Seven – *Meditation Two*

October 1 (Mon): “Second Meditation”, pp. 16-19 (through para. 28)

October 3 (Wed): cont., pp. 19-23

October 5 (Fri): Discussion Day, Third Written Reflections Due

Week Eight – *Meditations Three & Four*

October 8 (Mon): “Third Meditation”, pp. 24-36

October 10 (Wed): INSTRUCTIONAL DAY, NO CLASS

October 12 (Fri): “Fourth Meditation”, pp. 37-43

Week Nine – *Meditations Five & Six*

October 15 (Mon): “Fifth Meditation”, pp. 44-49

October 17 (Wed): “Sixth Meditation”, pp. 50-62

October 19 (Fri): Second in-class exam

PART THREE – Mill’s *On Liberty*

Week Ten – *Introduction*

October 22 (Mon): Introduction to J.S. Mill

October 24 (Wed): *On Liberty*, “Introductory”, pp. 5-12
October 26 (Fri): cont. pp. 12-17

Week Eleven – *Liberty of Thought and Expression*

October 29 (Mon): *On Liberty*, “Liberty of Thought and Expression”, pp. 18-35
October 31 (Wed): cont. pp. 35-45
November 2 (Fri): cont. 45-54

Week Twelve – *The Limits of State Authority*

November 5 (Mon): *On Liberty*, “Of the Limits to the Authority of Society” pp. 73-81
November 7 (Wed): cont., pp. 81-90
November 9 (Fri): Discussion Day, Fourth Written Reflections Due

Week Thirteen – *Applications*

November 12 (Mon): VETERANS DAY, NO CLASS
November 14 (Wed): *On Liberty*, “Applications”, pp. 91-112
November 16 (Fri): Third in-class exam

PART FOUR – Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

Week Fourteen – *Parts 1-2*

November 19 (Mon): Introduction to David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning*, “Part One” pp. 11-24
November 21 (Wed): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Two and Three”, pp. 25-35
November 23 (Fri): THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week Fifteen – *Parts 3-6*

November 26 (Mon): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Three and Four”, pp. 37-41, pp. 43-8
November 28 (Wed): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Five and Six”, pp. 49-53, pp. 55-9
November 30 (Fri): Discussion Day, Fifth Written Reflections Due

Week Sixteen – *Parts 7-12*

December 3 (Mon): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Seven and Eight”, pp. 61-66, pp. 67-71
December 5 (Wed): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Nine and Ten”, pp. 73-77, pp. 79-88
December 7 (Fri): *Dialogues Concerning*, “Parts Eleven and Twelve”, pp. 89-99, pp. 101-114

Last Day of Class

December 10 (Mon): Final in-class exam