

Philosophy 100 [Introduction to Philosophy] Syllabus
June 23rd – July 23rd | MTuWThF 1:10-3:20 | CDH 128B
Office: CDH 511A | Office Hours: Tu & Th, 3:30-4:30 or by appointment
E-mail: olsenb3@u.washington.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The aim of this course is to become acquainted with several major themes in the history of Western philosophical thought in order to gain a fundamental understanding of the discipline. I am of the opinion that this goal cannot be adequately accomplished without a concurrent focus on becoming comfortable with philosophical methodology. So, throughout the term there will be a heavy emphasis placed on *practicing* philosophy through:

- (1) Close reading of (small sections of) original texts,
- (2) Analysis of argumentative structures,
- (3) Focused class discussions, and
- (4) Numerous opportunities to engage in philosophical writing.

In addition, throughout the course we will frequently pause in our historical project to link older writings to contemporary works, emphasizing the fact that philosophy is a living, breathing discipline in the modern world.

TEXT(S):

Most of the texts we will be drawing from in this course are available on-line, so there are *no* required texts. However, there is an optional anthology which contains almost all of what we will be reading, which is available at the bookstore:

Classics of Western Philosophy, 6th edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn, Hackett Publishing Co., 2002 (ISBN: 0-87220-637-8).

In addition to the text I will ask you to find online, there are four texts that I will provide for you (readings for parts of Week 3 and 4). Information on where to find the appropriate texts online is below (in “Course Topics and Readings”).

ASSIGNMENTS:

In this course, you will be required to complete six skills assignments, a term paper draft, a term paper, and a final exam. You must complete five of six of the skills assignments, which will be worth 10% each. The sixth assignment, if completed, will replace a lower grade on a previous assignment. Overall, the grading policy for all assignments will be as follows:

Skills Assignments – 50%
Term Paper Draft – 10%
Term Paper – 15%
Final Exam – 25%

The **due dates** for all assignments will be as follows:

- Skills Assignment #1 [Argument] – due 6/26
- Skills Assignment #2 [Comparative Analysis] – due 6/27
- Skills Assignment #3 [Objection/Response] – due 7/1
- Skills Assignment #4 [Implication/Application] – due 7/3
- Term Paper DRAFT – due 7/9
- Skills Assignment #5 [Article Outline] – due 7/14
- Skills Assignment #6 [Passage Response] – due 7/18
- Term Paper – due 7/22
- Final Exam [in class] – 7/23

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

Due to the nature of the skills assignments (i.e. the fact that they will generally be discussed in class the day that they are due), I will not accept *any* late skills assignments except in the case of genuinely extraordinary circumstances. The term paper, and term paper draft, is a bit different; I will deduct .2 grade points per day late if either of these assignments is not handed in on time. I do not accept assignments handed in electronically, nor will I distribute assignments electronically.

PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Don't plagiarize others' work. I assume you are familiar with what constitutes plagiarism and the University of Washington's rules concerning academic conduct. If you are not, I suggest you find out immediately, either by asking me or tracking the information down elsewhere (such as the University of Washington website). Credit your sources, and while I encourage you to talk with others about assignments, concepts, etc., make sure your work is your own. If I find an instance of plagiarism, I will do whatever I can to ensure that the responsible party is sufficiently penalized.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- (1) Describe common responses to the major philosophical questions posed throughout history.
- (2) Explain and discuss the rationale behind important philosophical positions.
- (3) Apply important philosophical concepts to situations not considered in their readings.
- (4) Assess the reasonableness of philosophical theories.
- (5) Demonstrate that they have mastered objectives 1-4 both through polite and constructive dialogue with their classmates, as well as in written form.

CAVEAT:

The procedures written above, and the course schedule below, are subject to change in the event of unusual extenuating circumstance; students will be given advance written notice of such changes.

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS (the appropriate page numbers in the optional text are marked in brackets):

WEEK # 1 – What is Philosophy? / Life and Death of Socrates / Obeying the Law vs. Civil Disobedience

Mon. 6/23 – What is Philosophy? / What is an argument?

Tues. 6/24 – *Euthyphro* [20-28; <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>]

Wed. 6/25 – *Apology* [29-41; <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>]

Thurs. 6/26 – *Crito* [42-48; <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html>]; **Skills #1 Due**

Fri. 6/27 – Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter From Birmingham Jail” [online at http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html]; **Skills #2 Due**

Recommended Reading: [1-2]; plato-dialogues.org/links.htm

WEEK # 2 – Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* / Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Mon. 6/30 – *Meditations* I & II [460-466; <http://www.wright.edu/cola/descartes/mede.html>]

Tues. 7/1 – *Meditations* III & IV [466-476]; **Skills #3 Due**

Wed. 7/2 – *Enquiry*, Sections I-IV [734-748; <http://www.18th.eserver.org/hume-enquiry.html>]

Thurs. 7/3 – *Enquiry*, Sections V-VIII [749-775]; **Skills #4 Due**

Fri. 7/4 – HOLIDAY

Recommended Reading: [452-459]; www.wright.edu/cola/descartes; [732-733]; www.18th.eserver.org/hume-enquiry.html

WEEK # 3 – Philosophy of Science (Confirmation of Scientific Hypotheses) / Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*

Mon. 7/7 – Selections from Hempel, “Studies in the Logic of Confirmation” [provided]; **Mock Midterm**

Tues. 7/8 – Selections from Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* [provided]

Wed. 7/9 – Duhem, “Physical Theory and Experiment” [provided]; **Paper Draft Due**

Thurs. 7/10 – *Grounding*, Preface, Sections I & II [954-984] (focus on Duty and FUL)

Fri. 7/11 – *Grounding*, Preface, Sections I & II [954-984] (focus on FUH)

Recommended Reading: [876-877]; www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/Kant.html; philosophy.eserver.org/kant/metaphys-of-morals.txt

WEEK # 4 – Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* / Mill, *On Liberty*

Mon. 7/14 – Onora O’Neill, “Between Consenting Adults” [online at www.jstor.org]; **Skills #5 Due**

Tues. 7/15 – “Between Consenting Adults,” continued

Wed. 7/16 – *On Liberty*, Chapter 1 [1050-1057; <http://www.bartleby.com/130>]

Thurs. 7/17 – *On Liberty*, Chapter 2 [1057-1077]

Fri. 7/18 – Feinberg, selections from *Offense to Others* [provided]; **Skills #6 Due**

Recommended Reading: [876-877]; www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/Kant.html; philosophy.eserver.org/kant/metaphys-of-morals.txt; [1015-1016]; www.utilitarianism.com/mill1.htm; <http://www.bartleby.com/130>

WEEK # 5 – Synthesis

Mon. 7/21 – Feinberg, selections from *Offense to Others*, continued

Tues. 7/22 – Final Exam Review; **Final Paper Due**

Wed. 7/23 – **Final Exam**