

Philosophical Problems Syllabus

NOTE: This syllabus is NOT the final version and may be subject to change.

Phil 101/CRN 24865
Philosophical Problems
Date/Time: MTWR 9:00 am – 10:00 a.m.

Instructor: Lauren Eichler
Office: Susan Campbell Hall 232
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description & Objectives

In this course, students will develop an understanding of some of the methods, goals, and questions raised in Western philosophy by delving into some of the major areas of interest within the discipline. The course will be divided into six units, each of which will cover a particular topic within philosophy through various writers from different time periods, backgrounds, and genders in order to get a well-rounded taste of what the topic has to offer.

Unit one will explore the necessity of education and how we should engage in learning. The purpose of this unit is not only to read about what philosophers have said on the topic of education, but to reflect on our own educational experiences and our goals in this course.

Unit two will attempt to answer the question, “what is philosophy?” In doing so, we will read texts from two authors who are generally considered “founders” of the Western philosophical tradition as well as a writer from the contemporary era.

Unit three will tackle questions regarding religion. Questions we will attempt to answer are: Does God exist? What is faith? What would it be like to live a life without morals?

The relationship of the body to the mind will occupy our fourth unit. Though much has been said on this topic, we will take an in-depth look at one of the most iconic texts in philosophy, following which we will see how it has been taken up and responded to in more recent times.

In unit five we will enter the very lively and contentious discussions regarding the relationship between philosophy and race and gender. We will start by looking at several “traditional” views of women and nonwhites, read some responses to those views, then read several influential texts within the contemporary discussion.

Finally, unit six will explore the role of philosophy within the social and political realms. Sociology, political science, law, and psychology have all influenced this aspect of philosophy as we will see from the selection of texts we will be reading.

Learning Objectives

In addition to an exploration of these areas of philosophy, some of our main objectives include:
1) Reading and familiarizing ourselves with a breadth of major (and not so well-known) texts both in the history of philosophy and in contemporary philosophy
2) Developing the ability to think critically, raise critical questions, and engage in philosophical conversation
3) Improving and enhancing writing skills in an academic setting.

Required Texts

All texts will be available on Canvas.

Classroom Conduct

Because philosophy is a discussion-oriented discipline and may involve contentious issues, you will be expected to listen to your fellow classmates with respect, respond thoughtfully to other students and the text, and raise questions and issues with the knowledge that other people may have different perspectives. It is important to be open to new ideas, personal experiences, and perspectives that you might not share.

Cellphones are prohibited from the classroom unless you have received permission from me to use them.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and distribution of a total of 500 points:

Assignment:	Points:	Final grade percentage:
<i>Three Papers</i>	300 (100 each)	60%
<i>Participation</i>	100	15%
<i>Reading Quizzes</i>	100 (10 each)	20%
<i>Personal Reflection</i>	100	5%

Quizzes

There will a short 10 question multiple choice reading quizzes each Thursday on the material covered for that week.

Essays

In this course we will be developing skills in philosophical writing. You will write three papers for this class. The first two papers will be 900 – 1200 words in length. The final paper, due on Wednesday of finals week, will be 1500 – 1800 words in length. Each essay must include an outline of what you will write in your paper.

Each essay assignment will be made available on Canvas. I will provide you will two topics. You will answer ONE question according the guidelines of the assignment. Each essay must be submitted online on Canvas and through Veracite. Without both copies, your paper will be considered not submitted.

What kind of grade does a paper deserve? The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department.

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = okay. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = poor. Several errors, a tenuous grasp of the material.

F = failing. Problematic on all fronts, indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

A	94 – 100	B-	80 – 83	D+	67 – 69
A-	90 – 93	C+	77 – 79	D	64 – 66
B+	87 – 89	C	74 – 76	D-	60 – 63
B	84 – 86	C-	70 – 73	F	59 and below

Late Policy

For each day that your paper is late, you will be docked a third of the final grade for that paper. Exceptions to this policy are made for medical reasons and extreme circumstances. In these cases, please contact me via email before the deadline.

Participation/Attendance

Attendance and participation are required components of this course. Participation includes both speaking and contributing to discussion as well as attentive listening. In order to receive full credit for attendance, you will be expected to have your texts and reading assignments with you each day. Attendance will be taken during each class. More than four absences will result in no higher than a C grade for the course.

A – Exceptional: To achieve an A the student must miss no more than one class, be recognized as a leader in discussion, consistently contribute to and bring the discussion to a deeper level, must not dominate the discussion or inhibit other students from participating, and bring a printed copy of the text to every class.

B – Very good: Students will miss no more than two classes and take a very active role in discussion with on topic and thoughtful remarks, and bring a printed copy of the text to every class.

C – Good: Students will miss no more than three class sessions, will sometimes participate in discussion, and only brings a printed copy of the text sometimes.

D – Poor: To achieve, the student will miss no more than four classes, only participate in discussion very little, and only occasionally bring a printed copy of the text to class.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating will result in a 0 for the assignment and potentially a failure from the course. Please review these tips and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism:

<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

and be mindful of the university's plagiarism policy:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>

Special Needs

If you have a special need that may impact your ability to complete the course requirements, please let me know at the beginning of the term.

Reading Schedule

Education

Week 1

1/4: Introduction

1/5: Dewey, "Education as a Necessity of Life" from *Democracy and Education*

1/6: Noddings, "Learning and Self-Understanding" from *Critical Lessons: What Our Schools Should Teach*

1/7: Discussion

What is Philosophy?

Week 2

1/11: Plato, "Allegory of the Cave" from *The Republic*

1/12: Aristotle, Book 1, Chapters 1 – 2 from *Metaphysics*

1/13: Russell, "The Value of Philosophy" from *The Problems of Philosophy*

1/14: Discussion

Philosophy of Religion

Week 3

1/18: MLK Holiday

1/19: Anselm, "Ontological Proof for God's Existence"

1/20: Kant, "A Critique of the Ontological Argument"

1/21: Discussion

Week 4

1/25: Tolstoy, TBD

1/26: Weil, "To Desire without an Object" from *Gravity and Grace*

1/27: Nietzsche, selections from *The Antichrist*

1/28: Discussion

1/29: **FIRST ESSAY DUE ON CANVAS**

Mind/Body Problem

Week 5

2/1: Aristotle, Book 2, Chapters 1 – 4 from *De Anima*

2/2: Descartes, Meditation 1 from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

2/3: Descartes, Meditation 2 from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

2/4: Dennett, "Where am I?"

Week 6

2/8: Lloyd, "The Man of Reason" from *The Man of Reason*

2/9: Merleau-Ponty, "Sensation" from *Phenomenology of Perception*

2/10: Merleau-Ponty, "Introduction to Part 1" from *Phenomenology of Perception*

2/11: Discussion

Race and Gender

Week 7

2/15: McIntosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

2/16: Leonardo, "The Color of Supremacy"

2/17: Collins, "Black Feminist Thought"

2/18: Discussion

Week 8

2/22: Rousseau, "Sophie" and Wollstonecraft, "Vindication of the Rights of Women"

2/23: Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*

2/24: Young, "Throwing Like a Girl"

2/25: Discussion

2/26: **SECOND ESSAY DUE ON CANVAS**

Social & Political

Week 9

2/29: Locke, selections from "Second Treatise on Government"

3/1: Hobbes, selections from *Leviathan*

3/2: Cordova, "Ethics: The We and the I" from *American Indian Thought*

3/3: Discussion

Week 10

3/7: Foucault, selections from *Society Must Be Defended*

3/8: Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

3/9: Follett, "Power"

3/10: Discussion **PERSONAL REFLECTION DUE ON CANVAS**

FINAL ESSAY DUE MONDAY OF FINALS WEEK ON CANVAS.