

Introduction to Philosophy (PHL 1002W) Spring 2021

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Office Hours: Mondays 9:10-10:00am CDT or by appointment
Synchronous Meetings: Wednesdays & Fridays 9:10-10:00am CDT

Course Description

As a society, we tend to accept that knowledge is both necessary and important—having it enables us to solve problems and we’ve developed institutions and tools in order to pass our knowledge on to future generations. However, we rarely stop to ask what knowledge consists of and what standards we use to determine whether or not we have it. This course will introduce you to an array of figures in the history of philosophy who investigate, explain, and make use of knowledge. Throughout you will be encouraged to consider the concept of knowledge, its sources, and various uses.

This is also a “W-course” which means a significant portion of the material and assignments are intended to help you improve your writing skills. As we approach the end of the semester, we will shift away from reading philosophical texts and towards discussing strategies and techniques for writing and editing.

Required Texts

1. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford University Press (ISBN: 978019921361)
2. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Hackett Publishers (ISBN 9780872201927)
3. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hackett Publishers (ISBN 9780872202290)

All of these texts should be available at the library, in addition to being easy (and relatively cheap) to find elsewhere. However, if you have any issue (financial or otherwise) in acquiring these texts please contact me as soon as possible and we will work something out.

All other readings will be made available in PDF format on the course Brightspace page.

Accommodations

If you require any accommodations to help you succeed in this class, please let me know as soon as possible and I will do everything I can to help. Please bring appropriate documentation from the EAD where necessary.

Honor Code

Vanderbilt’s Honor Code applies to this class it does to all work and life at Vanderbilt. Any plausible case of academic dishonesty will immediately be transferred to the Honor Council. If you are sure about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, or questions about the code, please contact me. If you have not done so already, please read the “Statement of Honor Code” available here: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/the-honor-system.

Policies & Expectations

- I will do my best to respond to any emails/ requests for office hours promptly (within 24 hours if not sooner) **during the school week**. However, I do not check my school email often on the weekends, so if you email me after 7pm on Friday you should not expect a response until Monday morning or Sunday night at the earliest.
- I do my best to get grades back to you quickly. You can expect to get grades/feedback on your assignments back within a week from the day they are turned in
- Philosophy is an argumentative discipline and while lively debate and discussion are encouraged, disrespectful behavior and language will not be tolerated. You are free to disagree with your classmates and the authors we read during the course, but I expect everyone to be kind and charitable, even when criticizing.
- When in synchronous Zoom meetings, I **strongly encourage** keeping your camera on, especially during breakout rooms and class discussions. If you know this poses a **consistent** issue for you, please contact me. I understand there may be occasional instances when internet instability or other technology-related problems may make having your camera on difficult/impossible. If you are unable to have your camera on, you still are expected to attend and participate in synchronous portions of the class.
- All assignments (discussion boards, quizzes, reading notes, etc.) are due on Monday by 9:00am CDT the week after they are made available unless otherwise stated (see Final Paper). All materials will be made available at the start of each week (9:10am on Mondays). Given the flexibility of many of the assignments, **late work will not be accepted**. However, if you find yourself in need of an extension on any assignment, please notify me as soon as possible. I reserve the right to not grant extensions if given less than 48 hour-notice.

Grading Breakdown

Attendance & Participation 15%

Quizzes 10%

Writing Reflections & Individual Meetings 5%

Reading Notes 15%

Short Writing Assignments 10%

Final Paper (total 45%)

 Proposal (5%)

 Annotated Bibliography (10%)

 Draft & Peer Review (10%)

 Final Draft (20%)

Grading Scale

94-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	65-69: D+	0-59: F
90-93: A-	83-86: B	73-76: C	60-64: D	
	80-83: B-	70-72: C-		

Attendance & Participation

Your attendance and participation grade will depend on three factors: attending and participating in the synchronous Zoom meetings, and your posts on the bi-weekly discussion boards. On the discussion boards you are required to post once and reply twice for full credit. Posts and replies should be at least paragraph long (3-7 *thoughtful* sentences). Participation in Zoom sessions will require you to have read the material. You should come to class prepared with comments or questions about the reading. You are allowed two absences, no questions asked, that will not affect your grade. Any additional absences will require documentation from a Dean/ doctor/ other relevant authority to be considered “excused”. Unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Quizzes

There will be 7 short (~10 minutes) quizzes each week during the first nine weeks of the course. Only your highest 5 scores will count toward your grade for the quiz category. These quizzes are designed to test your understanding of the material in the readings.

Writing Reflections and Individual Meetings

Twice during this semester, you are required to submit a 1-2 page writing reflection and schedule a brief (5-10 minute) meeting with me. The first writing reflection is due by **Monday, February 8th**, though you may turn it in earlier. Once you have turned in your writing reflection, email me to schedule a meeting. Your second writing reflection is due *at the latest* by **April 26th**. You can turn in your second writing reflection assignment as soon as you have completed the draft and peer review steps of the final paper assignment. Specific information about the writing reflection assignments can be found on Brightspace.

Reading Notes

You are required to turn in reading notes at least 5 times over the course of the semester, but like the quizzes, only the 3 highest scores will count towards your grade. There is a template for the reading notes on Brightspace. I plan on using the reading notes to structure class discussions for the week. If you turn in less than 5 reading notes, the **highest** score you can earn in this category is a 70%. There are 8 opportunities for reading notes through the semester.

Short Writing Assignments

You will have 2 short writing assignments prior to the final paper. These assignments are intended to give you an opportunity to practice specific skills and receive feedback on your written work. You will be provided with prompts for these papers, both of which should be 3-4 (double spaced) pages long. Your first short writing assignment is due on **Monday, February 22nd**. and your second short writing assignment is due **Monday, March 15th**.

Final Paper Assignment(s)

The grade for your final paper will consist of several different parts. As you will see, we will spend a considerable amount of the course on these various steps. Each step is designed to help you develop your paper topic, improve writing abilities, and become familiar with the process of writing an academic paper. You are expected to do additional reading for your particular paper topic.

Proposal: Your proposal should be approximately 1-2 double-spaced pages long and should touch on the following: your paper topic, your thesis/ argument, the sources you plan to engage with, and any challenges or questions you foresee regarding your paper topic, research or writing process. Students are strongly encouraged to email or schedule a Zoom meeting with me if they have questions or are having trouble coming up with a paper topic prior to turning in their proposal. This is due on **Monday, March 22th**.

Annotated Bibliography: Your annotated bibliography should contain 5 entries of sources you plan to utilize in your paper. Entries for each source should be roughly 5-7 sentences long and should explain both the main idea/ argument of the source as well as *how* you plan on using it in your paper. More details about this assignment are available on Brightspace. It is due **Monday, March 29th**.

Paper Draft: A draft of your final paper is due several weeks before the final paper deadline (**Tuesday, April 6th**) You should aim to have all or most of your paper written (~8 pages). A major part of writing is revising. This deadline is set early so as to allow time for the peer revision assignment, to permit me the time to give each of you detailed feedback, and to make it possible for you to revise and refine your paper before the final due date.

Peer Review: Every student will be required to do a peer review on a classmate's paper draft. This will consist of leaving comments on your peer's draft as well as filling out a short worksheet (available on Brightspace). Once you have completed your peer review, you will submit both your annotated version of their paper and the worksheet on Brightspace, and I will distribute them to your peer review partner. *I will not provide comments on your paper draft until you have completed your peer review.* It is due **Wednesday, April 14th**, but as previously mentioned, the sooner you turn it in the sooner you will get my feedback on your paper.

Final Paper: The rubric I will use for grading your final papers is available on Brightspace and will be discussed in detail during a Zoom meeting once we begin this portion of the class. It is due **Monday, May 3rd** and should be at least 8, but no longer than 10 double-spaced pages (12pt font, 1-inch margins).

Course Schedule:

We will **NOT** meet during our scheduled time on Mondays. During this time, I will hold open for open office hours for anyone who has questions about the reading/ assignments. Wednesday and Friday meetings will be a combination of short lectures, Q&A, and large/ small group discussions.

All reading notes, discussion board posts, and quizzes from the previous week are due at 9:00am CDT on the following Monday. All materials for the current week will be made available on the Brightspace page at the start of our "class time" on Mondays (9:10am CDT). Video lectures on the readings for that week will also be made available and will not exceed 30 minutes. Watching the videos prior to the Wednesday and Friday synchronous meetings is highly recommended.

The time you spend on the video lectures, quizzes, and discussion boards is intended to (roughly) equal the 50 minutes you would have spent “in class” on Mondays.

Week One 1/25-1/31

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 (We will start reading Plato’s *Meno* in class together)
 Option #1 for Reading Notes for Week 2 Readings due by 2/1
 Writing Reflection #1 due by 2/8
 Schedule meeting with Professor Cunningham between 2/1-2/7

Week Two 2/1-2/7

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Readings: Plato (finish *Meno*) & Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book I)
 Discussion Board #1 due by 2/8
 Quiz #1 due by 2/8
 Option #2 for Reading Notes for Week 3 Readings due by 2/8
 Writing Reflection #1 due 2/8
 Meet with Professor Cunningham at individually scheduled time

Week Three 2/8-2/14

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Readings: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book II) & Mengzi (Book I, part I)
 Quiz #2 due by 2/15
 Option #3 for Reading Notes for Week 4 Readings due by 2/15
 Short Writing Assignment Prompt made available on 2/8

Week Four 2/15-2/21

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Readings: Mengzi (Book I, part II) Confucian Analects (Books I-IV) & Dao De Jing (Chapters 1-11)
 Discussion Board #2 due by 2/22
 Quiz #3 due by 2/22
 Option #4 for Reading Notes for Week 5 Readings due by 2/22
 Short Writing Assignment #1 due 2/22

Week Five 2/22-2/28 (reading days 2/23-2/24)

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Readings: René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*
 Quiz #4 due by 3/1
 Option #5 for Reading Notes for Week 6 Reading due by 3/1

Week Six 3/1-3/7

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Reading: David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Sections I-V & Section XII)
 Discussion Board #3 due by 3/8
 Quiz #5 due by 3/8
 Option #6 for Reading Notes for Week 8 Readings due by 3/8
 Short Writing Assignment Prompt #2 available on Brightspace starting 3/1

Week Seven 3/8- 3/14

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Watch Video Lectures
 Readings: Jane Addams, "Educational Methods"
 Quiz #6 due by 3/15
 Option #7 for Reading Notes for Week 8 Readings due by 3/15
 Short Writing Assignment #2 due by 3/15

Week Eight 3/15-3/21

Readings: Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"
 Discussion Board #4 due by 3/22
 Option #8 for reading notes on week 11 reading due by 4/5
 Quiz #7 due by 3/22
 Paper Proposal due by 3/22

Week Nine 3/22-3/28

Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday (writing workshops)
 Annotated Bibliography due by 3/29
 Watch Annotated Bibliography videos (recommended)
 Option #8 for reading notes on week 11 reading due by 4/5

Week Ten 3/29-4/4

*****GATHERING WEEK*****

No new readings, quizzes, reading notes, or class meetings this week. Use this week to catch up, get ahead, focus on other courses, or just chill. I will not host regular office hours on Monday this week, but if you have questions about the readings, assignments, or remainder of the course, please email me to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Week Eleven 4/5-4/11 (reading days 4/7-4/8)

Reading: Gloria Andaldula, "Towards a New Consciousness"
 Attend Class Meetings 9:10-10:00am Wednesday and Friday
 Work on Final Paper Draft
 Final Paper Draft due 4/6 (submit draft via Brightspace)
 Peer Review due by 4/14 (submit via Brightspace)

Week Twelve 4/12-4/18

Reading: Kristie Dotson, "Concrete Flowers"
 Attend Class Meeting 9:10-10:00am on Wednesday
 Peer Review Group #1 meets 9:10-10:00am Friday
 Work on Revising Final Paper
 Schedule Meeting with Professor Cunningham between 4/19 and 4/30

Week Thirteen 4/19-4/25

Peer Review Group #2 meets 9:10-10:00am Wednesday
 Peer Review Group #3 meets 9:10-10:00am Friday
 Work on Revising Final Paper
 Writing Reflection due by 4/26
 Meet with Professor Cunningham (during this week or next)

Week Fourteen 4/26-5/2

Attend Final Full Class Meeting 9:10-10:00am on Wednesday
 Work on revising/finishing Final Paper

Final Papers Due 5/3 by 11:59pm

Additional Resources

The Writing Studio- You are all strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services offered by the writing studio, especially for the final paper assignment. Follow the link below for more information/ to schedule an appointment.

<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab- The link below is a great resource if you have questions about citation styles/ formatting rules. There is no "standard" format for philosophy paper citations, so I have no preference on which style you choose to use, so long as you are consistent throughout all final paper components.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

"Philosophize This!" Podcast- The host of this podcast has episodes for many major philosophical figures and texts. The episodes are about 20 minutes each. They are helpful for giving additional historical context, explaining the main ideas of a text, and describing the themes and approaches of various philosophers. The podcast is available on Spotify, Apple Music, and Patreon.